

MASCULINITY OF FATHERHOOD IN JAPANESE NEWS MEDIA

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Master's Programme in Contemporary Societies

Social Psychology track

Master's thesis

May 2020



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HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Faculty of Social Science		Laitos – Institution – Department Master's programme in Contemporary Societies (Social Psychology Track)	
Tekijä – Författare – Author Mai Hattori			
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title Masculinity of fatherhood in Japanese news media			
Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject Social Psychology			
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Master's Thesis		Aika – Datum – Month and year May 2020	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages 66 pages
<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>This study aims to identify diverse masculinities of fatherhood and the subject positions in Japanese news media. In post-war Japan, Japanese men upheld breadwinning masculinity, also called Salaryman masculinity, which positioned the domestic sphere as the domain of women. In contemporary Japan, men are socially expected to play the care roles instead of solo financial provider roles within the household. However, conventional patriarchal ideology has persisted, assigning men as breadwinners and women as primal caregivers as complementary partners. Hybrid masculinity that adopts caring role but upholds the dominating power over women has been also observed. Since masculinity reconstructs patriarchal power relations, this study attempts to investigate the complex discourses of constructed masculinities of fatherhood and the subject positions that men can adopt in contemporary Japan.</p> <p>As this study focuses on the power dynamics of masculinity, this study is situated within the field of critical social psychology and is grounded in social constructionism. This study applies the concept of Hegemonic masculinity developed by Connell (1987). Foucauldian discourse analysis is adopted to approach the discourses and subject positions. The research questions are: RQ1) What kind of masculinities of fatherhood are constructed in Japanese news media? and RQ2) What kind of subject positions are provided for Japanese fathers in the news media? In total, 31 articles, provided by 14 news medias, are collected from Yahoo! News online news platform, of which the range of published date is May 2019 to October 2019.</p> <p>As a result, this study identifies five discourses: <i>Men work discourse</i>, <i>Men are not good at childrearing discourse</i>, <i>Time with family is precious discourse</i>, <i>Men participate in childrearing discourse</i>, and <i>Equal parenthood discourse</i>. The subject positions attached to the discourses are suggested as: Breadwinner, Secondary caregiver, Involved father, In a higher status than women, and Equal partner of women. Whereas breadwinning masculinity still has upheld the domination over women, the masculinity that explicitly rejects the traditional gender role is also identified. In addition to the traditional hegemonic salaryman masculinity, hybrid masculinity that exploits the femininity to maintain the hegemonical power is identified. Within several discourses, emphasized femininity is constructed by women by positioning themselves as primary caregivers.</p> <p>With the help of the analysis framework of Foucauldian discourse analysis developed by Willig (2008), this study illustrates the practices and possible psychological experiences by men. This study proposes to the government and public institutions to constitute gender-neutral discourses within the policies and services. This study contributes to critical social psychology by adding to articulated knowledge of possibilities for making sense of the relation between masculinity and domestic sphere. Furthermore, this study proposes the possible shifts of gender relations towards equality by identifying gender-equal discourse that has not been observed in other current masculinity studies in Japan.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords Masculinity, Hegemonic masculinity, Caring masculinity, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, Discourse, Subject position			

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1 INTRODUCTION

In Japan, the role of a father has significantly shifted due to the socio-economic changes that have occurred over the last three decades. Until the 1980s, the traditional role of men within Japanese family units had been financial providers, while women handled housework and childrearing (Iwata, 2014). This clearly demarcated gender roles within the household shaped the norm be *daikokubashira*¹ for men and to be dedicated housewives to support their husbands for women (Dasgupta, 2014). This Salaryman² masculinity, which is Hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987), legitimated the power relationship between men and women in a household and justified the division of labour. The role of fathers, however, has been challenged by societal shifts such as increased employment of women and the birth rate decline (Sano & Yasumoto, 2014). The government has encouraged men to engage in housework and childcare since the 1980s (c.f., *Childcare and Family Care Leave Act*). With the social demand of involved fathers, caring masculinity of fatherhood has emerged, which justifies the men's participation of childcares (Taga, 2005).

However, previous studies reveal that men still tend to uphold breadwinning masculinity while taking up the role of secondary caregivers (Tatsumi, 2017). Moreover, the gender of fathers as "men" is often stressed in the context of childcare, women and men tend to position men who take care of children in a higher status than women (Tatsumi, 2013). For example, the term *Ikumen*³, which the government promotes as the *Ikumen* project, highlights the "coolness" of childcare of men. The word *Ikumen* positions involved fathers as the ones to deserve praise while the role of women as primary caregiver remains (Vassallo, 2017). Hence, *Ikumen* is a hybrid masculine figure which plays the socially accepted role as a caregiver but at the same time enjoys the privilege of the patriarchy.

Since masculinities regenerate gender hierarchy, and the dynamics of gender relations in the context of childcare has been challenged, it is relevant to investigate how the diverse

¹ Central pillar. A metaphoric expression of a solo economic provider as the ideal man

² Middle-class white-collar workers working for a large company (Hidaka, 2010)

³ A coin word which is the combination of "Ikuji (childcare)" and "Ikemen (cool man)"

masculinities of fatherhood are constructed and intertwined each other. This study focuses on the discourses and subject positions with the help of Foucauldian discourse analysis. Foucauldian discourse analysis gives us an access to contemporary meaning-making around Japanese fatherhood and cultural gender relations, and the identities that can be constructed for men in the family context (Willig, 2008). As mass media not only reflects the available norms within the society but also reproduces the gender relations, this study sheds light on the discourse constructions and subject positions in the Japanese mass media. This study focuses on especially news media that reaches to a wide population regardless of their demographics.

This study is rooted in critical social psychology and grounded in the social constructionist framework as many other studies within critical social psychology are. As the study is situated in the field of critical social psychology, it explores inequalities, questions of power and gender and how these may be linked with the psychological experiences of individuals (Riley & Evans, 2017). This study contributes to critical social psychology by adding the knowledge of changing masculinity of fatherhood in the context of Japan. Furthermore, since the positivist framework is dominant in Japanese psychology (Aono, Igarashi, & Nameda, 2013), this study offers the critical perspective to approach masculinity to Japanese social psychology realm.

This paper illustrates the study on masculinity of fatherhood in Japanese media. Since this study is grounded in post-structuralism approach under social constructionism theoretical framework, chapter 2 introduces the concept of gender in social constructionism, discourse, and subject positions in macro constructionism. Chapter 3 illustrates several fundamental concepts to investigate gender relations in the context of fatherhood within masculinity studies, such as hegemonic masculinity and caring masculinity. Chapter 4 discusses the masculinities of fatherhood in Japanese context. It illustrates the transition of fatherhood and masculinity shifts in Japan, and previous studies on masculinity in media. Chapter 5 shortly describes the research question of this study, and chapter 6 illustrates the data and method to approach masculinity of fatherhood in Japanese news media. Chapter 7 demonstrates the

analysis of discourse and subject position surrounding Japanese fathers. In the end, chapter 8 discusses the implications based on the findings and the contributions of this study, as well as the limitations and suggestion for further studies.

2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

This study utilizes the concept of Foucauldian discourses and subject positions grounded in social constructionism to investigate the discourses which regulate the thoughts and behaviours of men. This chapter firstly discusses the fundamental features of social constructionism and how gender should be understood in social constructionism. Then this study clarifies the discourse in the Foucauldian perspective that focuses on power. Lastly the presented subject position offers a significant meaning to this study, since it allows us to access the positions that men can take up and their possible subjectivity.

2.1 Social constructionism and gender

Social constructionism is a theoretical orientation that opposes the essentialism of mainstream psychology. While the essentialism is based on the idea that thoughts and attitudes pre-exist as psychological structures and manifest themselves in our actions, social constructionism sees the world as social processes and there is no given or determined natures (Burr, 2015). Burr (2015) specifies that characteristics of social constructionism compared to other mainstream psychology as: Anti-essentialism, questioning realism, historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, language as a form of social action, a focus on interaction and social practices, and focus on processes (Burr, 2015, p.6-12).

Social constructionism shares the critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, as our way of understanding the world is determined by the way that language is structured (Burr, 2015, p.54). Our experience and consciousness are intangible without the framework of language to give it structure and meaning, so that we can only express our feelings, our

thoughts, and behaviours by using the concepts embedded in our language (Burr, 2015, p.61). Knowledge is sustained by the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other. Therefore, the way we commonly understand the world and the concepts we use are all historically and culturally relative (Burr, 2015, p.4).

The category “woman” and “man” does not simply mean the naturally occurred distinct types of human beings in social constructionism. Social constructionism questions that the categories with which human beings understood the world do not necessarily refer to a real division. While essentialism assumes that there are objective truths of manliness and femininity to be discovered in men and female’s bodies, social constructionism underpins West and Zimmerman’s (1987) argument that gender is something we do rather than something we are (Riley & Evans, 2017). Thus, the seemingly natural category based on the reproductive organs is bound up with gender, the normative prescriptions of masculinity and femininity in a culture, so that two categories of personhood only have been built upon them (Burr, 2015, p.3). Craig (1992) expressed that common understanding associated with gender is learned, thus even biological theories that see gender differences as “natural” are also the product of cultural distinctions. This study in critical social psychology also applies the understanding that gender is culturally and historically articulated norms.

2.2 Foucauldian perspectives of discourse

Macro social constructionism, which is particularly influenced by the poststructuralist work of Foucault (1972, 1976), focus on the power of language bound up with social structures, social relations and institutionalised practice (Burr, 2015. p.25). In macro social constructionism, the term “discourse” has a different meaning than the one in micro social constructionism. Whereas micro social constructionism emphasizes the individual capacity of the use of language as cultural resource, macro constructionism emphasises the way that the forms of language regulate not only what we can think and say, but also what we can do or what can be done to us (Burr, 2015, p.73). Since the focus is on issues of power, macro social constructionists are especially interested in analysing various forms of social

inequality, such as gender, race and ethnicity, disability and mental health, with a view to challenging these through research and practices. This study also adopts the understanding of discourse in macro social constructionism to investigate the gender inequality in Japanese society.

According to Foucault (1972), discourse consists of certain set of knowledge and social practices, which establishes what is accepted in a society in a given historical time. For example, socially constructed sets of knowledge about ideal masculinity through discourse shapes our understanding of certain types of masculine idea such as certain behaviour or values. Foucault (1976) insists that discourse entails the power to regulate the behaviour of individuals in the society. Thus, constructed knowledge of masculinity enforces men to behave in certain ways and position men who is not “masculine” enough as marginalized. Foucauldian perspective of discourse allows this study to illuminate what kind of masculinities in Japanese society shape the cultural acceptability of certain values and behaviours for Japanese men.

2.3 Subject position

Discourse, in addition to offering a way to understand the world, implicitly provide a position that individuals may take. The person who occupies “positions” within discourse can only write, speak or think about social object or practice in specific ways within a given historical period (Arribas-Ayllon and Valerie Walkerdine, 2017). Davis and Harré (1990) explain that once a person takes up a particular position in discourse, the person inevitably sees the world from the “vantage point” of that position. Thus, only the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are relevant within the own discursive practices become available for the person who takes up the position.

Hollway (1984), in her study to investigate and theorize the construction of gendered subjectivity, states several significant points to understand subject positions and subjectivity. Hollway claims that discourses make available gendered positions for subjects to take up, so that women and men are placed in relation to each other through the meanings which

discourse makes available. Moreover, the subject positions are specified for the category such as “man” or “woman”, and they are not equally available to all the categories, as women cannot put themselves in the position for men and vice versa. Subject position offers individuals subjectivity. Hollway insists that since practices and meanings have developed through the people, subjectivity of men and women should take into account for the changes in the dominance of certain discourses. Foucault, on the other hand, denies a theory of subject, as the subject is merely the effect of power and knowledge. Yet, he proposed that change is possible through shedding light on marginalized and repressed discourse, making them available as alternatives (Burr, 2015, p.140).

Therefore, discourses and subject position are relevant to investigate, since they shed light on how the individuals, Japanese fathers in this study, can behave as fathers and men within modern Japanese society. Unveiling the subject position allows us to understand what men can see, do, think as fathers in Japan; what is allowed for them to do, what compels them not to do. This study utilizes Foucauldian discourse analysis to approach the discourse surrounding the father in Japan. Foucauldian discourse analysis allows us to explore the constructed discursive objects by problematizing the power relations attached to it. I will discuss the practicalities and issues more in the methods section.

3 MASCULINITY AND MEN

Masculinity is in constant movement. From a critical gender perspective, masculinity constitutes the dominant power over women and marginalized men and provides men certain practices to strive (Connell, 1987). Although hegemonic masculinity has been dominant and deeply linked with the paid work in the post-war era across the world, new caring masculinity has emerged with the shifts of the responsibility of fathers (Edley, 2017). This chapter describes the relationality of Men’s study and Women’s studies and presents the complex features of masculinities. The chapter also introduces Hegemonic masculinity (Connell,

1987) that is a significant concept for the masculinity studies and discusses the newly emerging caring masculinity.

3.1 Masculinity studies in gender study

Men's studies represents the collective work of scholars who have found the concepts and insights of feminist theory useful in the exploration of male gendering (Craig, 1992). Since the Men's studies is largely pro-feminist in its approach, Men's studies seeks neither to replace nor to supplant women's studies, but contrarily, it seeks to extend and expand the insights into gender relationship offered by feminist thought (Craig, 1992; Kimmel 1987). Edley (2017) discusses the complex political landscape between Women's studies and Men's studies and states that some feminists are highly sceptical about the emergence of the Men's studies, as men have already dominated the attentions for a long time in the history. In response, some academics have abandoned the title of Men's studies and used an alternative nomenclature, that is Masculinity studies (Edley, 2017, p.9-10).

Edley (2017) points out that there has been much discussions of men being in a state of crisis. The crisis is found in such as an increase of violence, health problems, education gap behind of women, and the difficulties to fulfil the responsibility as fathers due to the change of value that the emphasis placed on "being at home" since around 1990s (Edley, 2017 p.13). Edley cites the Roger Horrocks' book "Masculinities in crisis", to highlight that the Masculinity studies investigates "masculinities" not "men", and the crisis stems from gender shifts over time. The next section will elaborate the masculinity that this study aims to explore.

3.2 Masculinity

Even though masculinity tends to be seen as a natural and obvious concept which is the opposite of femininity, it is actually far more complicated. Reeser (2010), throughout his book "Masculinities in Theory", insists that it is necessary to approach masculinity with theories and, since the ideas of masculinity are far from stable and fixed, no single definition should be applied. Reeser points out that masculinity is problematized by moving across

cultures and context. The masculine idea varies from culture to culture. Furthermore, even within a single cultural and temporal context, the construction of masculinity might be challenged through external critiques of the model or through another construction being presented as more valid (Reeser, 2010). Therefore, there is no single masculinity in one context, but rather diverse “masculinities” (Brandth and Kvande, 1998). Moreover, masculinity cannot be directly linked to the male body in any simple or stable way, though males have more to gain from masculinity (Reeser, 2010).

Edley (2017) considers there to be five theses of theoretical approaches to masculinity: as an expression of the body, as a psychic structure, as a trained response, as power, and as practice. Since this study draws upon the post-structuralism approach, the focus here is on the idea of masculinity as power and as practice. The nature of masculinity is to see it as *ideological*, which legitimates the advantage of some groups over others; similarly, women’s fragility and irrationality can also be seen as ideological, which justifies their subordination to men. Furthermore, under the strong influence of Michel Foucault, masculinity is considered as social practice, because language defines the experiences, and what we imagine about masculinity is strongly influenced by the way we talk about it. Reeser (2010) explains that post-structuralism is appropriate as an intellectual basis for the study of masculinity, because many of concerns and premises of post-structuralism, such as discourse, power, and instability, have direct application to masculinity studies. Post-structuralism also assumes that masculinity contains no natural, inherent or given meanings, and whatever the meanings they have are in constant movement. Thus, masculinity is constantly being reconstructed by discourse in a context of unequal but shifting power relations.

3.3 Hegemonic masculinity

As the previous sections presented, the history of masculinity studies has focused on how power is both exercised and sustained by controlling the meaning of what it is to be a man (Edley, 2017). Connell (2014) describes masculinities as configurations of gender practices associated with the position of men in a structure of gender relations. Masculinity is shaped

by the ruling sections of society to both reflect and protect their privileged status. Among a wide range of masculinities, hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987, 2005) is a central concept in masculinity studies. Hegemonic masculinity means the pattern of masculinity that is the most “honoured”, which occupies the position of centrality in the structure of gender relations, and whose privileged position helps stabilize the unequal gender relations (Connell, 2014). Thus, hegemonic masculinity embodies the most honoured way of being a man today, and all other men strive to relate to it. This normative masculinity ideologically legitimates the subordination of women to men, as well as the subordination of nonhegemonic men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Several features of hegemonic masculinity should be elaborated here: the relations with other masculinities and femininity, the analysis level of masculinity, and the possibilities that hegemonic masculinity can be challenged. Firstly, Connell (2005) argues that hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to other specific nonhegemonic masculinities: *complicit* masculinities, *subordinate* masculinities, and *marginalized* masculinities. *Complicit* masculinities describe the situation of most men (Edley, 2017). Although *complicit* masculinities do not embody hegemonic masculinity, through practicing the person realizes some of the benefits of unequal gender relations and consequently helps sustain hegemonic masculinity in the culture (Messerschmidt, 2019). *Subordinate* masculinities, such as gay masculinity (Edley, 2017) or effeminate men (Messerschmidt, 2019), are constructed as deviant to hegemonic masculinity. Subordinate masculinity can offend the dominant ideal values of men. *Marginalized* masculinities are discriminated or trivialized, and excluded from attaining the hegemonic state, because of unequal relations external to gender relations, such as disability, class, race, ethnicity, and age. Furthermore, hegemonic masculinity is paired with emphasized femininity (Connell, 1987). Emphasized femininity is a form of compliance with the subordination to the interests of men (Connell, 1987, p.183). This study attempts to illustrate the interrelation of different masculinities as well as femininity in the relation with hegemonic masculinity.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state the three geographical levels, in which hegemonic masculinity should be analysed: Local, regional, global. *Local* level means that masculinity is constructed within face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities. *Regional* level is where masculinity is shaped in the culture or the nation-state, and *Global* level means hegemonic masculinity in transnational area. The masculinity in each level is intertwined. Global hegemonic masculinity may suppress or pressure regional and local hegemonic masculinity, and regional hegemonic masculinity may provide cultural materials adopted or reworked in global arenas and models of masculinity that may be important in local gender dynamics (Messerschmidt, 2018). In this study, we will focus on the regional hegemonic masculinity as the study of the discourses in the Japanese society, which may refer from global trend and may affect the daily practices and interactions.

As one of fundamental features of hegemonic masculinity, it is possible to challenge hegemony (Connell, 2014). Hegemonic masculinity is culturally and historically significant to shape a sense of what is acceptable or not acceptable gendered behaviour, and it is open to change. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) claim that there can be a struggle for hegemony, and older forms of masculinity might be displaced by new ones. Thus, democratizing gender relation of abolishing power differentials can happen, for example, new dominant masculinities of fatherhood in Scandinavia which do not contribute to the reproduction of patriarchy (Christensen & Jensen, 2014). This study also investigates the challenged Japanese hegemonic masculinity and newly emerging masculinity, which may displace patriarchal gender system or construct new gender relations.

3.4 Fatherhood and masculinity

Historically, masculinity of fatherhood and being at a paid work are firmly associated (Edley, 2017, p.95). Being the financial provider in family has been linked to the image of ideal fatherhood even now across many regions in the world. In Western culture, the role of father towards his infant was to discipline, educate and instil a sense of moral before the Industrial Revolution. However, industrialisation distanced work and home and placed only men to

gain wages for family by excluding women from heavy industries (Edley, 2017, p.76-77). For example, Andrew Tolson (1977), cited by Edley (2017), described how the role of the breadwinner helped to secure men's power and authority within the family unit in the 1950s to 1960s in England, that his labour as an act of dutiful self-sacrifice for his family made the role of breadwinner somehow *heroic*. At that time, the breadwinning hegemonic masculinity of fatherhood created the ideologies to justify men's domination of the world of work and provide women the care roles at home as suitable (Hall, 1992).

Today, fathers are widely expected to be actively involved in their own children's upbringing, not just as breadwinners (Edley, 2017; Gough, 2018; Gregory & Milner, 2012; Schmitz, 2016). The change can be linked to the nature of global economy. Since 1970s, though the change may vary depending on the regions across the world, a significant proportion of middle-class families require dual incomes to cover living. Moreover, the respectable identity of working women had established gradually within middle-class circles (Edley, 2017). Haywood and Mac án Ghaill (2003) state that these cultural representations of new man, new lad and new father assume that men are in crisis and consequently are being coerced into processes of change. There is no doubt that many men today both expect and are expected to engage with their children to an extent that would never have applied to their older generations (Edley, 2017; Elliott, 2016).

Therefore, the shift in the masculinity from the breadwinning hegemonic masculinity to new masculinity is topically studied in masculinities studies. Care is one of the key concepts for the study on masculinity of fatherhood. Today care is considered an expected component of involved fathers. According to Hanlon (2012), care was absent from traditional constructions of masculinities because care is defined as feminine, thus the position of care is seen as subordinated. Furthermore, Hanlon points out that doing care means enacting a feminized identity and seen as something men are bad at, and for some men care means giving up the power associated with traditional masculinity which is difficult to accept (Hanlon, 2012). Hanlon claims that the transformation that men experience while doing caring challenges the

gender division of labour, and men's caring should be supported as a gender equality intervention itself.

Discussion on the transformation of men along with caring divides the opinions of scholars. Optimistic perspectives of men's caring practices support the view that gender egalitarianism has modified and modernised gender relations, though slowly. Pessimistic perspectives argue that men continue to have power and privilege. The contribution by men for unpaid caring does not match to increased participation in the formal labour market of women, resulting in women's "double-shift" of domestic work and paid labour (Hanlon, 2012).

For instance, as an optimistic perspective, Elliott (2016), who has theorized the framework of caring masculinity, insists that caring masculinity constitutes a critical form of men's engagement and involvement in gender equality and provides the possibility to sustain social change for gender relations. According to Elliott (2016), the cores of caring masculinity are the rejection of domination from masculine identities and the integration of values derived from the realm of care such as positive emotion, interdependence, and relationality. Johansson and Klinth (2008) investigate how Swedish men from different social and cultural background relate themselves to the new idea of caring father through interviews and identifies that all the focus groups explicitly showed positive view towards the ideology of gender equality and showed relatively great involvement to be gender-equal father.

On the other hand, a number of the scholars point out that caring by men not only maintain the domination of men but even reproduces and masks gender inequality. Brandth and Kvande (1998) point out that both of men and women engage in the process to reproduce gender hierarchy by offering masculine care higher status. Randles (2018) reveals that hybrid masculinity of fatherhood reconstitutes patriarchal power by drawing distinctions between mothering and fathering. "Hybrid masculinity", according to Bridges and Pascoe (2014), refers to "selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated masculinities and – at times – femininities into privileged men's gender performances and identities". Hybrid masculinity works in ways that not only reproduces contemporary systems of gender, raced and sexual inequalities but also conceals

inequality (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). Therefore, though masculinities are constantly challenged and negotiated to form the valid ones to modern society, it may keep its dominance over women and subordinated men.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW ON MASCULINITY IN JAPAN

In post-war Japan, the hegemonic masculinity of fatherhood has been salaryman masculinity in Japan. With the promotions of involved fathers by authorities, caring masculinity has also emerged. Although the idea of involved fathers is widely accepted in the society, gender hierarchy has persistently remained so that men uphold their breadwinning masculinity and women fulfil the responsibility of domestic labour in addition to paid work. This chapter firstly introduces the transition of masculinity of fatherhood in Japan, then discusses the salaryman masculinity, which has been hegemonic in Japan, and its relationality with the emerging caring masculinity. The latter part of the chapter describes how the masculinity of fatherhood has been constructed in media in the world and Japan.

4.1 Fatherhood and masculinity in Japan

Japan is located as a pivotal country in the global decline of patriarchy or “role of the father”, which occurred during the twentieth century across some areas of the world such as Western Europe and East Asia (Rush, 2015). Similar with other areas of the world, hegemonic masculinity has been linked with being financial providers, and emerging caring masculinity challenges to displace hegemonic masculinity. In Japan, while salaryman masculinity has legitimated the division of private and public sphere based on gender since the 1950s, current fathers are expected to be more involved with family. Nevertheless, patriarchal gender relation has been upheld. *Ikumen* is one of the representative examples of hybrid masculinity which adopts the caring role but at the same time reproduces the privileges of men’s position. This section outlines the transition of Japanese fatherhood and their masculinities since the 1950s to today.

4.1.1 Transition of Fatherhood in Japan

In Edo period⁴, Japanese family stem (*ie*) formed the dominant position of fathers as household leaders in terms of economic, social and legal aspects, and this *ie* system lasted till the middle of 20th century (Shwalb, Nakawaza, Yamamoto & Jung-Hwan, 2004). *Ie* literary means family or household, which typically included three or more generations. A main characteristic of the *ie* system was a patriarchy in which the most senior male household member held ultimate authority over various matters, including the marriage of family members (Sano & Yasumoto, 2014). The obligations of a father at home included childrearing, especially caring and educating the firstborn son who inherits *ie*. Although the amount of engagement to the household tasks was less compared to women and maids at home, fathers especially in lower social class often committed domestic chores such as cleaning or shopping (Vassallo, 2017).

The societal position of fathers in Japan has changed significantly since the 1950s. After World War II, patriarchal *ie* system was abolished during the American occupation and fathers became legally equal person with their wives and children (Rush, 2015; Shwalb et al., 2004). Meanwhile, under the rapid economic growth after 1955, the population of employees in tertiary industry increased (Taga, 2005). This led to a situation where men worked long to serve a company and were assigned to frequent job-transfers to distance cities unaccompanied by their wives and children (Shwalb et al., 2004; Taga, 2005). During the rapid economic growth over 1960s to 1980s, Japanese men were portrayed as “corporate warriors (*kigyo-senshi*)” who dedicated to their companies (Gasgupta, 2004).

The role of father was re-evaluated in the 1980s to 1990s. *The Equal Opportunity Employment Law*, enacted in 1986 and amended in 1999, brought a greater awareness of gender equality in society and helped to progress the political and economic participation of women in Japan (Kobayashi, 2004). Furthermore, the absence of the father at home started to be problematized during 1990s, linked to the decline in total fertility rate (Sano &

⁴ Since 1603 to 1867 during the Tokugawa shogunate

Yasumoto, 2014). The government established the *Basic Direction for Future Child Rearing Support Measures* in 1994 aiming at increasing the fertility rate, known as the “Angel Plan”, which involves comprehensive policies for promoting gender equality in childrearing and flexible access for childcare for working parents (Sano & Yasumoto, 2014). The government also promoted “work-life balance” for employees and encouraged employers to be “family friendly”, such as enacting The *Childcare and Family Care Leave Act* in 2009, which allows fathers to take paternity leave regardless of their partner’s employment status (Sano & Yasumoto, 2014).

Today, despite these promotions, the role of father as a caregiver has not been fully played in national scale. The percentage of men taking paternity leave remains as 5.14% in 2018, and the average duration of acquired paternity leave has been under 5 days (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2019). In addition, according to a national survey, the average time spent on housework by a husband, who has a child under 6 years old, is 83 minutes a week, comparing to a wife who spent on housework 454 minutes a week (Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2017). Thus, the housework and childrearing has strongly remained as a responsibility of women. The transition of fatherhood is strongly linked to the shifts of masculinity of fathers, which will be explored in the next section.

4.1.2 Salaryman masculinity and caring masculinity

In Japan, the link between salaried employment and masculinity has been acknowledged by a number of scholars (Dasgupta 2003; Roberson 2005, Hidaka 2010; Cook 2013). Heterosexual marriage and being a provider with a secure income make a man as “*Ichinin-mae no otoko* (fully-fledge man)”. Thus, *Sararíman* (salaryman), who are middle-class white-collar workers working for a large company, is considered as a hegemonic masculinity in Japan (Hidaka, 2010; Dasgupta 2003). For Salaryman, being *Daikokubashira* (*Central pillar*), a metaphoric expression of a solo economic provider as the ideal man and unshakable ideological status, is a significant hallmark of masculinity (Hidaka, 2010, p.100). The salaryman masculinity became hegemonic during the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in the 1950s and 1960s, which reinforced divisions between the public sphere as the domain

of men and the private sphere as the domain of women. A man and woman were widely depicted as perfectly complementary to each other, as the number of middle-class salarymen and their housewives increased (Hidaka, 2010).

Since the societal and economical participation of women has been promoted, earning a living is no longer only men's job. As discussed in the previous section, starting from the 1990s, the father's role as caregiver has been advocated by society and the government, and the expectation for men to be involved fathers rather than to be absent breadwinners has increased (Taga, 2005). According to the shifts of ideal fatherhood, caring masculinity started to be acknowledged compared to the conservative salaryman masculinity. *Ikumen* is one of the representative concepts of emerging caring masculinity in current Japan. The coined word *Ikumen* is a combination of the words "*Ikuji* (childrearing)" and "*Ikemen* (cool man)", meaning a man who actively participates in childrearing (Ministry of Labour, Health and Welfare, 2010). The Japanese government started the promotion of *Ikumen* project in 2010, such as giving "*Ikumen* of the year" award to selected influential figures and collecting voices from self-proclaimed *Ikumen* to its website. *Ikumen* became one of the national top 10 trendy words in 2010 and it has still widely used in media.

The word *Ikumen*, however, emphasizes the childcare of "men" by positioning the involved men as "cool". The word positions involved fathers as the ones to deserve praise, while primary caregiver role remains as of women (Vassallo, 2017). Therefore, caring masculinity that the word *Ikumen* constructs is hybrid masculinity which strategically utilizes the characteristics of femininity to maintain power relations between women and men.

Furthermore, a number of researchers point out that salaryman masculinity, to be the main financial provider in a family, persistently holds its power today. For example, Tatsumi (2017) identifies a strong emphasis on father's role as a breadwinner in the *Ikumen* promotion posters, such as a picture of a father wearing suits and a slogan claiming "Dad who is excelled in work is cool". Tatsumi concludes that *Ikumen* discourse still gives a father the primary role of breadwinning as a parent, even though the *Ikumen* project was a turning point to promote a positive image of new fatherhood. Furthermore, Funabashi (2006) as cited in

Tatsumi (2013) categorizes the type of masculinity of father and names one type as “men in double role type”, in which men are willing to engaging with childrearing as long as it does not threaten the “breadwinner role”. Ishii-Kuntz (2003) also points out that, although fathers consider the caregiver role as the “responsibility as a parent” and prioritize the caregiver role over the breadwinner role, they still tend not to give up the breadwinner role as men.

Several studies have reported that there is an inner conflict of men between the traditional masculinity and new masculinity of fatherhood. Taga (2013), as cited in Mizukoshi, Kohlbacher & Schimkowsky (2016), concludes that Japanese men deemed to be torn between the contrasted ideal fatherhood of masculinities: the ideal fatherhood with the traditional breadwinning masculinity and public demand to be actively involved with their families. Tatsumi (2014) reveals from the discourses of self-proclaimed *Ikumen* that a number of men reported inner conflicts of handling the contradiction of “man as a breadwinner” and “childrearing role as a parent”, especially when their family-centred attitudes are not endorsed by their colleagues or bosses at company.

Therefore, today, though the ideology of salaryman masculinity still upholds the power, the multiplicity of masculinities of fatherhood in Japan has been evident. This study attempts to identify the constructed diverse masculinities in the news media, which affects how Japanese men can do or can think as fathers in contemporary society.

4.2 Fatherhood and masculinity in media

Media reflects the pre-existing understanding of the world, but it also reproduces them. Analysing the discourses in media helps us to understand the constructed power relations between men and women in contemporary Japan. Though new fatherhood as a caregiver has emerged in Japanese media with the shifts in social expectations, the patriarchal gender relations have been reproduced by emphasising the connection between men and paid work. Furthermore, involved men are often presented as greater than women who manage the daily child-raising. This section explores the masculinities in media around the world, then takes a close look at the previous masculinity studies on Japanese media.

4.2.1 Masculinities in media

Everything around us can be considered as textual (Burr, 2015). Thus, written materials, visual images or even the clothes someone wear tell us who we are and what we can do. Analysis of media representations allows us to gain a good sense of the way in which society is viewing a particular event or category of person (Budds, Locke, & Burr, 2013). MacKinnon (2003) emphasizes the importance of shedding light on representation in mass media, because the representation does not merely reflect the pre-existing meaning but also provides a meaning that it has created.

The representation of masculinity in media is widely researched after the emergence of masculinity studies. Masculinities are studied in the field of, for instance, pop culture such as movie (e.g., Forth, 2013; Zeglin, 2016), television (e.g., Feasey, 2008; MacKinnon, 2003), music (e.g., Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009; White, 2011), and comic books (e.g., Padva, 2005). Furthermore, the masculine representations in the field of advertisement (e.g., Jobling, 2014), sports media (e.g., László, 2017; MacKinnon, 2003), magazines (e.g., Stibbe, 2004; Rogers, 2005; Benwell, 2004), and news media (e.g., Susilo, 2017) are also studied. While the empirical studies on media representations of men originally tended to use content analysis as a method focusing on sex-role stereotypes, MacKinnon (2003) claims that it may be more helpful to find how masculinity is constructed in various media.

Although research has noted an increasing emphasis on the greater involvement of men in parenting, in-depth analyses of fatherhood in media outlets are rare (Schmitz, 2016). Here some masculinity study examples of fatherhood by Schmitz (2016) and Hunter, Augoustinos, and Riggs (2017) are presented. Schmitz (2016) has conducted content analysis of popular portrayals of fatherhood as conceptualized in 50 articles from 5 American parenting magazines. As a result, fathers have been placed as auxiliary, secondary parenting position compared to women with the overemphasized masculine identities. Major themes have contained the common portrayals of fathers as “men” as breadwinners. On the other hand, some articles have contained the perspectives that challenges traditional fatherhood by emphasizing the importance of fathering. Schmitz (2016) argues that it should be difficult to

for fathers to play the involved father role facing to cultural resistance of acknowledging men as legitimate parent.

Hunter et al. (2017) have investigated the discourses of 176 Australian newspaper articles which focused on primary caregiving fathers. As the result of discourse analysis, utilizing the concept of rhetorical devices and discourse analytic concepts derived from discursive psychology, three recurring interpretative repertoires have been identified: advocating for primary caregiving fathers, comparing the past and present, and barriers to father involvement. The repertoires have suggested contradictory and dilemmatic account of the involved father. Hunter et al. (2017) point out that even though new fatherhood is encouraged and promoted within the culture, hegemonic masculinity as breadwinner has been reproduced in news articles. Since this study focuses on the discourse in Japanese mass media, the next section focuses on the media constructions in the Japanese context.

4.2.2 Fatherhood and masculinity in Japanese media

Although Japanese masculinity is researched less than femininity and women (Roberson, 2005; Tatsumi, 2013), masculinities in media such as films has been also studied in Japan (e.g., Dasgupta, 2014; Barber, 2014; Yuen, 2014). For example, Roberson (2005) has investigated the ideologically embedded images and representational construction of masculinity articulated within Japanese advertisements of various energy drinks. The study has revealed that the advertisement reproduces a middle-class, white-collar, work-oriented Salaryman masculinity which is complemented by physical power and strength. Roberson (2005) concludes that Japanese media should critically examined for gendered ideology and the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. Dasgupta (2014) has studied the discourse analysis of masculinity in post-bubble Japan on multi-award film *Tokyo Sonata*, in which socio-economic and cultural shifts in 1990s to 2000s due to the “bubble” economy burst and the post-bubble recession, are played out. Dasgupta has identified that men experience the anxiety about emasculation and loss of authority after the collapse of bubble economy, which is associated with the abandonment of lifetime employment by institutions that men have devoted.

The studies of fatherhood and masculinity in media demonstrate the dynamics of masculinities negotiating and changing its form. Mizukoshi et al. (2016) have conducted a content analysis on how the terms “*Ikumen*” and “*Kazoku-sabisu* (family service)” are presented within 3,894 nation-wide newspaper articles. *Kazoku-sabisu* is a term that indicates activities that father reluctantly sacrifices his weekends and holidays to engage in family’s satisfaction and fulfilment, such as taking the family to an amusement park. The result reveals that the term *Ikumen* is positively presented as an updated concept of *Kazoku-sabisu*, as enjoyable, and as integrated into daily life of fathers. Tatsumi (2013) has researched the discourses on the diversity of masculinities of fatherhood in Japanese parental magazines. Tatsumi has focused on discourse analysis on the sections for fathers within the parental magazines that mainly target mothers-to-be and women who have a child who is 12 months and under. The study has identified the discourse to position a father as a caregiver as well as a breadwinner. The manliness and masculinity have been emphasized even in the father as a caregiver discourse, which maintains men’s position as different than, and higher than his wife (Tatsumi, 2013). Furthermore, men are positioned as “not good at childrearing”, in opposition of their wives who are good at childcare, which clearly assumes that maternal instinct is more excelled than paternal, and legitimates that father is not the primary carer. These discourses suggest that even if fathers simply participate in childrearing, it does not directly resolve the gendered division of labour at home (Tatsumi, 2013).

Even though Tatsumi has studied the discourse on the parental magazine sections for fathers, the discourse on the nationwide targeted media has not been well researched in Japan. This study will investigate the discourses of masculinity of fatherhood on the nationwide online news media in Japan, which reaches to the wide layers of demographics. Since the discourses are productions of social opinions but at the same time reproduce power relations as social practices, this study aims to identify how masculinities of fatherhood are constructed to perform gender practices and what kind of subject positions are available for Japanese men as fathers.

5 RESEARCH QUESTION

This study aims to identify the discourses of constructed masculinity of fatherhood in Japanese news media. Salaryman hegemonic masculinity which is strongly linked to the paid employment has been constructed and positioned men as primal financial providers in household. Even though caring masculinity of new fatherhood is considered to be a welcomed shift towards gender egalitarianism, a form of caring masculinity also may involve the reproduction of the power relations between men and women. Hybrid masculinity that uphold both caring masculinity and hegemonic masculinity have been observed. Thus, Japanese masculinity of fatherhood has been challenged and continued to change the forms. Therefore, it is relevant to explore the discourses surrounding men to investigate how the diverse masculinities of fatherhood are constructed and intertwined with each other. Since femininity may form the compliance of subordination to men (Connell, 1987), this study secondarily observes the constructed femininities within the news articles.

Furthermore, this study attempts to reveal the available subject positions for current Japanese fathers. Men have taken up the positions as breadwinners in their family since the 1950s. Today, on the other hand, men are expected to take the position as caregivers. Yet, men also may uphold the breadwinning role as primary responsibility besides the caregiver role. Since discourses in the media offer the subject positions for men, and once they take up the positions, the positions enable men to see the world only in certain ways, it is relevant to identify the available subject positions for Japanese men.

Since mass media not only reflects the available gender norm in society but also reproduces gender relations, this study sheds light on the discourse constructions in the Japanese mass media, especially news media that reaches to a wide population regardless of their demographics. The national survey by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2018) revealed that people use web portal to access to news (62.3%), more than any other medias such as newspaper (56.3%) or news website from newspaper companies (9.9%).

Thus, this study investigates the discourses and subject position of masculinity of fatherhood in news web portal.

Therefore, the research questions of this study are following:

RQ1: What kind of discourses of masculinities of fatherhood are constructed in Japanese news media?

Q2: What kind of subject positions are provided for current Japanese fathers in the news media?

6 DATA AND METHOD

This study analyses a data from a Japanese biggest news portal site, Yahoo! Japan News. In total 31 news articles that constitute the topics of fatherhood and childcare are collected. This study analyses the data with Foucauldian discourse analysis according to the framework of six stages developed by Willig (2008).

6.1 Data

The data used in this study were derived from Yahoo! Japan News, which is the biggest news web portal in Japan, operated by Yahoo Japan corporation (SimilarWeb, 2020). The Yahoo! Japan News gained approximately 150 billion Page View in 2018, and has continued to grow (Yahoo Japan Corporation, 2018). Yahoo! Japan News has 546 corporate suppliers including international, national and local newspaper companies, online magazine companies, and TV companies (Yahoo Japan Corporation, 2020). The fields of news are national and international politics, economics, entertainment, sports, IT, science, life tips and local news.

The data was selected by searching certain keywords within the portal site, then from which more relevant news articles were chosen. Since the study focuses on the masculinities of fatherhood in the relations with childcare and family involvement, the searching keywords

were determined in order to find the news articles that describes the relations of fathers and childrearing. The keywords were firstly a combination of the words “father (父親)” and “childrearing (子育て)” or “child-raising (育児)”, and other following keywords were added based on the searching results: “fathering (ファザーリング)”, “paternity (パタニティ)”, “*Ikumen* (イクメン)”, a combination of “dad (パパ)” and “childrearing (子育て)” or “child-raising (育児)”, and, a combination of “man (男)” and “childrearing (子育て)” or “child-raising (育児)”.

In total 1,408 news articles were found with these keywords including the duplicated articles which were acquired with different keywords. The term of published data was from 14th April 2014 to 9th of October 2019. From them, the articles in which masculinities of fatherhood are constituted or problematized were selected (Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2017). The articles which hardly focus on Japanese fathers were excluded, such as articles of which main topics are mothers or women, movies or TV dramas, animals, families of foreign countries or foreign nationality families in Japan and so forth. Within the articles, the columns and analysis articles were selected, since the articles which focus to report news with plain facts do not allow us to deeply interpret the discourses. Moreover, the news articles that focus on current fathers who have new-born babies or small children were selected, since this study focuses on the current fatherhood rather than seniors, and care work is enormous and essential for small children (Tatsumi, 2013). The news articles which were published within 6 months at the point of October 2019 (i.e. from May 2019 to October 2019) were extracted, since the most of provided articles on the portal site ends their published term within a half year to a year from the published date, thus the older articles are supplied only by limited numbers of media. Because masculinity of fatherhood is dynamically shifting, the latest articles helps us to grasp the latest inclination.

In total, 31 news articles, 145 pages in Word document, are used as data for this study (see Table1 in Appendix). The range of the published date is from 13th of May to 5th of October

2019, and the articles are provided by 14 medias, including online life magazine, business magazine, news media based on local radio, and information website.

6.2 Method

This study utilizes Foucauldian discourse analysis to approach the discourses and subject positions. Although Foucauldian discourse analysis does not contain clear conceptual tools to guide the analysis unlike discursive psychology (Burr, 2015), Willig (2003) has developed the six stages method to perform Foucauldian discourse analysis: (1) Discursive constructions, (2) Discourses, (3) Action Orientation, (4) Positionings, (5) Practice, and (6) Subjectivities. These stages allow the researchers to identify discursive resources used in the texts and the subject positions they contain, and to explore their implications for subjectivity and practices (Willig, 2003. p.173). Since time and resource are limited, this study will carry out the analysis from stage 1 to stage 4. In the discussion section, this study discusses the implications of the practices and psychological experiences that the identified discourses and subject positions may provide.

Each stage provides instructions on how to proceed with the analysis (Willig, 2008). The first stage involves the identification of the different ways in which the discursive object is constructed in the text. All instances of reference to the discursive object should be highlighted, including both explicit and implicit references. The second stage focuses on the differences between constructions of the discursive object. Analysis sheds light on how the same discursive object can be constructed in different forms. The second stage aims to locate the various discursive constructions of the object within wider discourses. The third stage closely examines the discursive contexts within which the constructions of the object are being deployed. Action orientation stage allows us to illuminate what is achieved by speakers by adopting the certain constructed discursive objects. The fourth stage identifies the subject position that the discourses offer. Discourses make available positions within networks of meaning that an individual in a certain social category can take up. Therefore, conducting the analysis of stage 1 to stage 4 allows the scholar to identify the various constructions of the

discursive object within the wider discourses and the subject positions provided within the discourses (Willig, 2008).

This study addresses the analysis along with the six stages of Willig. Since this study aims to identify the masculinity construction of fatherhood in Japanese media, firstly I identify the different construction of masculinity of fatherhood in the news materials. Secondly, I map the various constructions of masculinity of fatherhood within the wider discourses in Japanese society based on the findings of previous studies and theories. As the third step, I will take a close look at the achievement of speakers through the discourses, such as men or women within the articles and the writers of the news articles. Lastly, the study identifies the subject positions of men offered by different discourses. As an ethical consideration to conduct the discursive analysis, I adopt a reflexive stance towards the data, aiming towards an accurate presentation of the discursive dynamics in the data.

7 ANALYSIS: DISCOURSE AND SUBJECT POSITION

The following five discourses where the masculinity of fatherhood is constructed are identified as: Men work discourse, Men are not good at childrearing discourse, Time with family is precious discourse, Men participate in childrearing discourse, and Equal parenthood discourse. While many of the constructed masculinities of fatherhood allow men and women to accomplish to legitimate, naturalize and maintain the authorities of men in households, the analysis also identifies the action to reject traditional gender hierarchy. The subject positions such as breadwinner, the secondary helper, involved father, in a higher status than women, and equal partner of women are suggested within the discourses.

7.1 Men work discourse

As previous studies identified, the *Men work discourse* is drawn upon in this study too, in more than half of the news articles within the data. The masculinity of fatherhood is

constructed as “breadwinning” is the most primary and essential responsibility for men (Tatsumi, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017; Hidaka, 2010; Dasgupta 2014). Breadwinning masculinity is constructed by men to legitimate their lack of commitment to domestic labour and to naturalize that the traditional division of labour within a household. In addition, this discourse is often adopted by women to naturalize their family responsibility as caregivers.

The article “*Ikumen* will be obsolete? 7 changes happened to men who experienced to manage the One-Ope (Article No.20 in Table 1)” introduces experiences of men who handled housework and childcare alone for a while. “One-Ope” stands for “One operation” to describe a single operation of domestic chores without a help of others nor public services. The article starts with the following excerpt:

Excerpt 1

In this Reiwa era⁵, men’s childcare is more and more becoming a hot topic. The Kaneka problem which went viral discussing about the notice of job-transfer just after the paternity leave and the man’s reassignment, the launch of an alliance by politicians which aims to legislate to obligate paternity leaves and so on, so there is no shortage of the topics. Till now, speaking of the One-Ope, we’ve had a strong impression that it’s a problem that women tend to fall into. However, there is a case that Japanese men, who tend to prioritize the work, happened to experience the One-Ope.

During the One-ope, what did he feel, and what happened after that? We asked these questions to the men who experienced One-Ope during the wife’s childbirth or the remote work with the children.

The excerpt adopts the *Men work discourse* to emphasize that men usually are not involved in childrearing operation by depicting the One-ope by men as “*there is a case that Japanese men, who tend to prioritize the work, happened to experience the One-Ope.*” and the single operation occurs in exceptional occasions such as “*wife’s childbirth or a remote work with*

⁵ Current era which started in May 2019

the children”. Even though the article presents active fathering, the men are positioned as caregivers whose main responsibility is breadwinning.

Interestingly, the majority of the articles that target female readers⁶ describe the toughness of domestic chores with the little help from their uncooperative husbands. In the article “A husband who doesn’t cooperate no matter what you do... 3 tips to let your husband participate in childcare and housework (No.19)”, the female writer suggests the tips for female readers how to get the help from the husband. The article starts with:

Excerpt 2

Have you ever dreamed “I hope my husband is more cooperative for childrearing and housework.”? If you are especially dual-income family, the burden of the wife to handle the childrearing and housework is not even imaginable. Therefore, this article introduces the tips to let your husband help you. Even if you were giving up like “my husband is not like a cooperative type..”, please approach him with these tips.

The reason that cooperation is needed for dual-income family

The number of women who handle both childrearing and work has been increased. However, even if they were enthusiastic and said “The work, the childrearing and housework, leave all to me!” in the beginning, there are many cases that they hit a wall when their work started.

The excerpt above pre-assumes that women are primary caregivers and their husbands are reluctant to be involved with domestic labour. The writer positions women as responsible for domestic chores even in dual-income family. In turn, the excerpt implies that the role of men is strongly tied to their breadwinning responsibility regardless of the employment situation of their wives. “*The work, the childrearing and housework, leave all to me!*” vividly depicts that the domestic labour still remains as the women’s responsibility as the “double-shift” (Hanlon, 2012) even if the women acquire the opportunities of economic participation.

⁶ More than half of the articles within the data hardly specify the gender of the readers, and around the same numbers of the rest of the articles specify the target readers either of women or men

The article of the following excerpt also targets female readers. The article, “The result of purposefully approaching my husband modestly to divide the childcare and housework.. was it too late to notice!? (No.14)”, suggests the tips for women to kindly ask a help to the husbands and praise them to gain further cooperation. The article more explicitly mentions that men are absent from home because of their work.

Excerpt 3

It's probably not only me who doesn't have any time to rest because of housework and says, "Though it's weekend's morning, it's only me being tremendously busy for preparing meals and washing laundry!". Weekend or weekdays don't matter for childrearing and housework, it's endless. But probably most families have the similar situations that the wife bears the most of burden and the reality is far from "sharing tasks" with the husband. My husband's work is busy, so I handle all the domestic chores from afternoon till the children go to sleep. With these days, I started to keenly feel "I wanna be relaxed at least on the weekends" and started think the way to get my husband to be involved to the housework. Here, I will introduce my invented ways with trial and error to involve the husband to the domestic chores.

In the excerpt above, the female writer explicitly mentions that her husband is absent from home till late due to his work, thus she inevitably takes care of the childcare and housework on the weekdays. The excerpt naturalizes the traditional division of labour that domestic labour is the responsibility of women. Even though the excerpt 2 and 3 problematize the current situation that women take care of all the domestic chores, the writers do not threaten the breadwinning masculinity such as by limiting the housework involvement of men only on the weekend (Funabashi, 2006, as cited in Tatsumi, 2013).

Here is one more example that women cast men as breadwinners rather caregivers. The article “The trend wave of obligating the paternity leaves! But is it really necessary? Wives speak their true mind (No.17)” discusses the necessity of the legislation to obligate fathers to take paternity leaves. The article is sceptical about the usefulness of mandatory paternity leave if men are not familiar with doing childcare and housework. In the section “We want him to

come back home early regularly rather than taking a paternity leave”, the writer introduces the voice of women:

Excerpt 4

Even if the wife and husband can do the childrearing together during the parental leave, if the husband has to work overtime and come back home late after the paternity leave, then after all the wife need to do One-ope. Therefore, there are many wives who want their husband to come back home early every day to help children's bathing and letting them sleep rather than to take a paternity leave.

There might not be many things that he can do during the weekdays after returning home, but if she could leave to the husband to take a bath with the child and if she can take a bath alone, she can have much better room in her mind just only since she has time that she can look away from the child for a while.

There are many nuclear families that the wives can only rely on their husbands, so if the husbands come back home early and he participates in the childcare even a bit, the burden of the wives will be reduced continuously.

A couple of articles present the similar descriptions as the excerpt above that wives hope their husbands to come back home early from work rather than to take paternity leaves. The excerpt above legitimates the lack of involvement of men in childcare based on the position of men as primary responsible for feeding the family. The female writer and women in the article cast women themselves as primal caregivers and position men as voluntary participants in the childcare.

Some articles refer the *Men work discourse* adopted by others for their purposes. In the article, “take the initiative in childrearing and housework, though intended to support the wife's career...The husband speaks his gloomy mind by being asked to be *Daikokubashira* (No.9)”, the men object the author, who previously claimed in his article that he pushes himself the burden of being the breadwinner. The men in this article claim that women also expect men to uphold breadwinning masculinity. The article introduces some experiences of men whose wives forcibly position them as breadwinners:

Excerpt 5

“It will be a problem if you won’t get promoted. I want to quit my job.” A salaried-man who live in Kanto region was told by his wife before their marriage. The wife quitted her job at the time of giving the birth and became a housewife. He suffers from insomnia and visits a hospital regularly. He takes medicines and continues to work. He thought about taking a sick leave, but there are no other earners in family. He asked her wife “do you want to work?” when two children graduated from high school and the toughness of the childrearing calmed down. She didn’t take it seriously saying “I don’t want to work. My father is a kind of person who says “why the hell he let woman work!”” ... The man says “There are cases that women depend financially on men. On the other hand, there is a trend to requite men to participate in childcare. It’s a contradiction.”

In the excerpt, the wife of a man draws upon the salaryman masculinity to place him in the position of breadwinner regardless of his wellbeing. She uses the voice of the senior man, which contains more power in *ie* system than the man in the article, to convince him to perform his salaryman masculinity. By referring to the episode and criticising it, the article problematizes the gendered norm to expect men to take the breadwinning role. This article positions men as unfortunate breadwinners forced by women, highlighting the emphasized femininity who willingly occupy the domain of domestic sphere.

Thus, breadwinning masculinity is constructed within the *Men work discourse*, and this discourse is taken up by men and women to naturalize the traditional division of labour based on gender. The discourse offers men the subject position as breadwinners and positions women as primary caregivers at home.

7.2 Men are not good at childrearing discourse

As Tatsumi (2013) points out, the news media also constructs the figure of man who is not good at childrearing or household tasks. In this discourse, men are depicted as inferior caregivers, in contrast to their wives who are naturally good at childrearing. Thus, the *Men*

are not good at childrearing discourse is deployed to justify that women inevitably play the primal caregiver roles in household.

For example, the news article titled “Why overslept? Why drunk too much? Common episodes of dad and kids at home that mom got surprised (No.18)” introduces various episodes of men who took care of children for a while. The title implies the contrast of “mom” and “dad” in terms of competence of childcare and indicates that “mom” usually takes care of children. In the article, wives present the episodes of their husbands as “astonishing”.

Excerpt 6

“My husband and our child visited his parent’s home, and he got really drunk, and they came back with a train. The child was much more reliable than my husband.”

“I called to my husband around 10 minutes before the time to go to school when I was on a business trip, but it seemed that he woke up when I called and he was upset.”

“I asked my husband to stay at home with the 3-years-old and new-born children when I went to a beauty parlour. When I came back in three hours, no one hadn’t even changed from their pajamas and toys were scattered everywhere in the house. It was chaotic.”

The excerpt above depicts men as careless and not capable of childrearing even for a couple of hours. Women position themselves as the person who is good at childrearing by being astonished with the failure of their husbands. This position justifies that men take care of the children only limited time.

Tatsumi (2013) emphasizes that the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse* takes up the essentialist stance to position men as instinctively incapable of caring. The article “Paternity leave was not ‘holiday’ at all. ‘Man and work and family’ that Tsuruno wants to tell R25⁷ generation (No.22)” also describes men as essentially incompetent of nurturing, in contrast to women who have maternal instinct. In the article, Tsuruno, a famous TV personality who took a paternity leave, tells the younger interviewer (Sano) that the youths should follow their

⁷ R25 is the original web media of the article. R25 generation means the business persons whose age are between 20s to 30s.

passion towards work when they can, and paternity leave should be taken to improve their childrearing skills as fathers.

Excerpt 7

Sano: Version as “parent”?

Tsuruno: The OS’s version sometimes is updated for smartphones and PCs, right? The functions are expanded, and it enables to do something which wasn't possible before.

Tsuruno: The same as that, the OS version of women totally changes when the child is born. But I haven’t experienced childbirth, so my version hasn’t changed from her “lover”. So I was puzzled with the drastic change of my wife, while my wife was probably irritated that I’m unchanged. ... The application of me that was unchanged since the marriage couldn’t correspond anymore to the OS versions of my wife which was updated every time she gave a birth. Therefore, paternity leave was “training term” for me to update myself as a “father” to catch up with my wife.

Within the excerpt, Tsuruno positions himself as an unmatured quality who needs to catch up with his wife who instinctively acquired her childcare ability as a mother. By claiming that men are essentially incapable of childcare compared to women, Tsuruno accomplishes to justify the lack of the commitment before taking the paternity leave. The success story, as Tatsumi (2013) identifies, from the incompetent man to the involved father (*Men participate in childrearing discourse*) is found in this article too.

Some articles adopt this discourse to present the uselessness of men at domestic chores. For example, the article “A husband who doesn’t cooperate no matter what you do... 3 tips to let your husband to participate in childcare and housework (No.19)” which uses the *Men work discourse* to highlight the absentness of men (Excerpt 2), also stresses the incapability of men in the housework.

Excerpt 8

You sometimes get irritated by your husband who does not do anything even if you asked, don’t you? In that case, please try following tips.

Give clear instructions: *There are many men who don't know what to do even when they are asked to help their wives. So, give him precise instructions such as "hang the washing out" or "vacuum", rather than "help the housework". Even your husband who doesn't usually make actions may follow your order.*

The article "What to do to let your husband be 'God husband' who can handle childcare and housework? The actual experiences by wives (No.5)" also illustrates general characteristics of men as clueless about housework.

Excerpt 9

Don't give up the communication and whine to them: *According to many of my friends, wives who have God husbands communicate with their husbands a lot. Generally speaking, men tend to not notice the details of housework and childrearing and not be good at initiatively making actions compared to women.*

Within the excerpts 8 and 9, women position men as naturally clueless of housework (*There are many men who don't know what to do*(Excerpt 8), *Generally speaking, men tend to not notice the details of housework and childrearing and not be good at initiatively making actions compared to women* (Excerpt 9)), thus women have to "instruct" them. In the discourse women clearly position themselves as responsible to take leaderships of the domestic labour at home. Thus, emphasized femininity is constructed who initiatively take up the role as main caregivers, which reinforces gender hierarchy (Connell, 1987).

Only few articles focus on the men's voices who are not willing to participate in housework. The article titled "The anxiety of women, the excuse of men, there is no justice between wife and husband? (No.30)" explains to women why men avoid committing the housework. The article suggests wives communicating well to let their husbands understand the feelings and burdens of the wives about housework. In the beginning of the article, men explain the reason of their lack of commitment.

Excerpt 10

At first glance, the excuses of men look indifferent

For example, men often say “I’ll leave it to you”. Many wives hear it. The phrase makes the wives feel that the tasks and decision-making are all left to them without any concrete suggestions. When the men say this, what do they think?

“Even if I suggest something, she will reject it saying ‘you don’t know anything’”

“Isn’t it better that the wife, as a main person of childcare and housework, decides. I’m being thoughtful for her.”

Moreover, even though the “Ikumen” has increased in the society, during the terms to raise infants, it’s a reality that there are many wives feeling unsatisfied with their husbands’ help.

“The child says “No!” “I wanna be with mom!””

“When I actually do some housework, it’s really difficult, I admire my wife. I feel it’s faster if I leave it to her.”

The excerpt shows that men position women as the essential caregivers and admit that women are superior in the caring sphere. In contrast, men position themselves as inferior and incapable of handling the housework. Since all of the articles which contain the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse* also adopt the *Men work discourse* within the articles to normalize the division of labour based on gender, the *Men work discourse* and *Men are not good at childrearing discourse* work hand in hand to legitimate the lack of family commitment of men.

Therefore, within the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse*, women are depicted as more powerful and superior than men in the domestic sphere, in contrast, men are positioned as inferior. As Connell (1987) insisted, hegemony of men is paired with emphasized femininity which supports the domination of men in the patriarchal system. The *Men are not good at childrearing discourse*, combined with *Men work discourse*, justifies the division of labour between women and men and offers the subject position for men as discretionally helpers at home.

7.3 Time with family is precious discourse

While the previous discourses construct the masculinities that men are reluctant to engage in domestic labour, this discourse explicitly constructs the caring masculinity that men are willingly involved to caregiving tasks as fathers. This discourse provides men a subject position as more involved fathers. This discourse, however, does not necessarily challenge the traditional gender relations. The discourse is often adopted to normalize the dedication for family, on the other hand, it is sometimes used to motivate men to spend time with their family in the limited time after their work or on weekends.

In several articles, the *Time with family is precious discourse* is drawn upon to embrace the toughness and difficulties of childrearing, insisting that the time with family is the most important for them. In this case, traditional salaryman masculinity is not constructed within the discourse. For example, in the article “I will lose my own time... the prescription for the fathering beginners (No.1)”, Ando, who established an organization called “Fathering Japan”⁸ discussed about fathering with Murahashi, who is a house husband.

Excerpt 11

Murahashi: I ask a simple question. Was the childrearing fun?

Ando: Childrearing was really hard in many ways. But I could feel that “Ah, the kids grew up” from their words or behaviours in a few moments. I probably like to see or feel that process that kids grow up. Many of fathers are just saying “Cute” by watching the video of kids taken by their wives who are taking maternity leaves. Why don’t they take paternity leaves and witness the moment live with their eyes?

Murahashi: I totally agree with you. It is such pity that they let only their wives occupy the childrearing, which is such an interesting thing.

Both Ando and Murahashi accomplish to dismantle the traditional gender role and position themselves as caregivers as one of parents. The discourse is used to accept the toughness of

⁸ An organization that encourages men to be involved to childcare

the childcare and embrace it. “*pity that they let only their wives occupy the childrearing*” explicitly expresses that Murahashi positions women as non-natural caregivers, so that it is also possible to let them not to “*occupy the childrearing*”.

In the article “Is doing a childcare a ‘hell’? The father’s anger was provoked from the conversation between men (No.21)”, the writer interviewed a man whose tweet, in which he showed his anger to another man on the conversation about childcare, went viral. The article presents the tweet of the concerned conversation, then introduce the background of the conversation (see also Equal parenthood discourse, excerpt 23). A man, who criticized another man who constructed breadwinning masculinity, tells the writer that he has changed his attitude towards childrearing after seeing his wife crying every night with the anxiety of childrearing.

Excerpt 12

Since I was such a useless father, I thought this is not good, so I started to engage in childrearing more and got the sense of ownership. And then, the more I spend time with my kids, the more I started to feel fun with it. ... I can witness my kids’ growth every day, and the kids are like friends for me, so sharing time with them and doing various things together is incredibly fun.

The excerpt constructs caring masculinity, and the men positions himself as a deeply involved caregiver. In this excerpt, by emphasizing the preciousness to witness the growth of the children as the same as excerpt 11, he succeeds to naturalize his involvement of childcare.

On the other hand, the *Time with family is precious discourse* sometimes is often adopted with the *Men work discourse* and *Men participate in childrearing discourse* (described later) and contributes to reproduce patriarchal gender hierarchy. In the article, a transcription of a radio program, “We asked ‘Daddy with the kids’ in the weekdays! Please tell how to spend time with the children (No.2)”, the interviewer asked fathers in a park during the daytime of weekdays, how to spend time with the children.

Excerpt 13

Interviewer: Are you spending time with the kids when you have a day-off?

Man1: Yes, I spend time with them. They will be 3 years old soon. In the beginning, they preferred the mother and cried a lot being with me, but I cannot spend so much time with my kids on weekdays, so I try to be with them as much as possible in the weekends. I feel relieved with my kids. They are the most important. I feel the time with my family is the most important. Today we'll go to a park then go home. Then I'll go to pick my wife up then eat together.

....

Interviewer: Where is your wife now?

Man2: She is relaxed at home (laugh). We ate lunch, the kids took a nap, so I decided to go outside nearby. My wife is a housewife, so she takes care of the kids in weekdays. When I have day-offs, I try to take care of the kids. I'm usually quite busy so I try to be with them on my day-offs as much as possible. I don't have day-offs so often, so this is precious.

Interviewer: What do you think of the time with your children?

Man2: Each moment never happens again. I feel that I can enjoy this kind of time only now, so I try to remember the small things well and take pictures of them.

As a conclusion, the radio personality comments:

Excerpt 14

Spending time with the kids, such as catching insects and play at a park, is what we have experienced in the past too. Fathers probably like this kind of time. They have to do their best with their work and spend the rest of limited time with the kids. That's the fun in life.

The men in the excerpts explicitly apply the *Time with family is precious* discourse to motivate their involvement of childcare. On the other hand, the men also adopt *Men work* discourse to legitimates that they hardly have time with their children, even though they want to. Therefore, even though the men are involved in the childcare, the fathering is presented as limited activity only in their leisure time outside of work. Excerpt 14 vividly positions men as voluntary caregivers who participate in the “fun part” of childcare such as playing at

a park (Edley, 2017; Johansson & Klinth, 2008). Moreover, the article emphasizes the gender of parent as a “man” and stresses the uniqueness of them being in a park on the weekdays. Thus, the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*, which highlights the difference of childcare by man and women, is also presented.

Therefore, the *Time with family is precious discourse* constructs caring masculinity and positions men as involved fathers. The *Time with family is precious discourse* is adopted to embrace and nullify the toughness of the childcare combined with *Equal parenthood discourse*, by positioning men themselves as equal caregivers as their wives. However, the *Men work discourse* is sometimes combined with the *Time with family is precious discourse* to legitimate the lack of time with the children and provide men the position as voluntary caregivers who take care of children only in leisure time. The *Time with family is precious discourse* with the *Men work discourse* also allows men to choose different childcare than women, which will be elaborated more in the following *Men participate in childrearing discourse* section.

7.4 Men participate in childrearing discourse

The *Men participate in childrearing discourse* depicts positive figures of involved fathers. Within the discourse, however, “man” is stressed in the childcare context, and the childcare by men is differentiated from the childcare provided by women (c.f. Tatsumi, 2013). Within the discourse, hybrid masculinity, which strategically utilizes the characteristics of feminine nursing features in order to uphold the privilege of being hegemonic, is constructed. The discourse is used to emphasize the greatness of the involved men with childcare and position men in a higher status than women.

For example, in the article “Why overslept? Why drunk too much? Common episodes of dad and kids at home that mom got surprised (No.18)”, women present the men’s childrearing as a special event, in a different section with the depiction of men as inferior within the *Men are not good at childrearing discourses* (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 15

Without mom!? The love between fathers and kids

“My husband and daughter went shopping, and I felt relieved to receive the pictures in which they are having fun.”

“I thought they went to play in a park, but seemed they went to Karaoke. The daughter and son enjoyed ice cream buffet until they felt so full! I also wanted to go.”

“While I went to have lunch with my friend, I asked my husband to spend time with the son who is under a year old. The son enjoyed a different route of walking, so the pictures of him being happy all the time were sent to my LINE⁹”

Regardless of the worries of the wives whether they have fights and whether the husband can take care of the children, the kids and fathers seemed to enjoy their own time. While feeling relieved that they came back safely and enjoyed the time, the wives might feel a little bit jealous..!?

The excerpt depicts the childcare by men as special and fun. “Different walking rout than mother” and “Karaoke and ice cream buffet” differentiates the childcare by men from women’s childrearing (Tatsumi, 2013). The women in the excerpt initiatively position themselves as primary caregivers and men as special caregivers, who are invited to join childrearing only when needed.

The gender of the father is emphasized in several articles. The article “Father who carries the `sin´ in his back wished to have daddy-friends and spread the novel excursion all over Japan (No.11)” describes excursion events for male parent, which was started from a tweet of a man. The article explains how the excursion event started, how it is running, and how people react about it.

Excerpt 16

The event is “Fathers leisurely excursion”

The event was born when a man, who invented the event, posted the following tweet on

⁹ The most common messaging mobile application in Japan

twitter. “It would be nice to go for a picnic only with male parents with their kids. We don’t declare the participation on purpose but let’s arrange the place and approximate time then we can talk to others if we feel like to. That kind of loose offline meet up.”

In the excerpt and throughout the article, gender of fathers as “male parents” is emphasized. Even though men construct caring masculinity, the emphasis on the gender category allows men to hold a different position than women as parent as caregivers.

Women sometimes present their position lower to encourage their husbands to participate in the childrearing. Several articles recommend women modestly ask their husbands to help them and praise the husbands about their commitment. For example, “A husband who doesn’t cooperate no matter what you do... 3 tips to let your husband to participate in childcare and housework (No.19)”, which utilizes the *Men work discourse* and *Men are not good at childrearing discourse* too (Excerpt 2, 8), suggests women to praise the husband in front of someone else to encourage him to be involved to domestic chores more.

Excerpt 17

Praise your husbands in front of somebody: When the husband is praised being said “you helped me so much”, the motivation of the husband will increase. The point of this tip is to praise him in front of someone. He will realize that “I am such a good husband”.

Moreover, “What to do to let your husband be ‘God husband’ who can handle childcare and housework? The actual experiences by wives (No.5)” also introduces the episode to encourage the involvement of the men to childcare.

Excerpt 18

Be attentive to guide the kids to like their father: *My friend B told me that “when the relationship with the kids is good, it becomes easier for the husband to join the childrearing”. For example, when the child asks a new toy, she tells every time to him “Your dad is working hard, that’s why you can buy a toy. So let’s ask your dad if it’s okay to buy it”, so that it creates the opportunities that the child thanks his father. ... There*

might be people who say that it is annoying to “set up the stage for him”, but the burden of mother decreases if father became capable of going out with kids or stay at home with kids. After I tried it, he looks quite happy when children tell him “Thank you” or “I love you”.

The women in the excerpts insist that women need to “praise”, “flatter (No.14)” and “set the stage” to encourage men, which depict men as somehow immature like children. In this way women remain their authority in domestic chore. On the other hand, women lower their positions and offer men a higher status in order to emphasize the greatness of involved fathers. The title of the article of excerpt 18 describes a husband who is committed to domestic chores as “*God husband*”. By depicting men who commit to domestic chores as “God”, it clearly positions the involved men as exceptional and honourable, and other men with withdrawn attitudes towards participating in childrearing is normalized. Furthermore, the woman in excerpt 18 emphasizes the breadwinning role of her husband (*Your dad is working hard, that’s why you can buy a toy*) and limits the man’s contribution to the domestic domain to only supplemental (*the burden of the mother decreases if father became capable of going out with kids or stay at home with kids*). Hence, both the *Me work discourse* and the *Men participate in childrearing discourse* are combined to provide the subject positions for men and women to play the conventional gender roles.

There is another example that the *Men work discourse* is combined with *Men participate in childrearing discourse*. In the article titled “*Ikumen will be obsolete? 7 changes happened to men who experienced to manage the One-Ope (No.20)*”, experiences by men, who handled the domestic labour alone, are presented. One of the men, Yamagata joined a project offered by his company that families stay in a cottage in an island and experience remote works. He discusses that he joined the project with his 1-year-old son and played with him in the sea, then worked when the son went to sleep.

Excerpt 19

What kind of changes happened after the life in the island?

“Under the unprecedented situation that father and his son spend one on one time, I could have a mindset that ‘I should only think about him when he is awake’”. In the special

environment, surrounded by the beautiful sea and mountains, maybe Yamagata himself could change his mood.

“I noticed that I’ve been thinking that I’m doing my best at work, so I want to have time to rest at home. But I realized that domestic chores needs to be done for 24hours and it’s more tiring than work.” ... Even though it was a week, he needed to manage all childcare and housework in the island. He realized that “work has the working-hours, but there is not end in housework. My wife didn’t really have time to rest.”

After Mr. Yamagata went back to Tokyo, he became to make sure that his wife have her own time.

The title of the article emphasizes “men”, though the article presents a sceptical view towards the word *Ikumen*. Since the time with the son is depicted as “unprecedented situation”, Yamagata distances himself from the regular caregiver role who manages the routine and mundane housework. Moreover, even though Yamagata constructs caring masculinity, the caring situation is depicted as special and unusual. Thus, his childcare is distinguished from the childcare by his wife, which immobilize the main division of labour in the family.

In addition to women lowering their position, men also position themselves in a higher status than women in the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*. Iwata, a voice actor, discusses his way of childrearing with the hosts of the radio program, Suzumura and Elisabeth, in the article “popular voice actors Mitsuo Iwata * Kenichi Suzumura the instruction manual of dads for moms (No.4)”. Iwata insists that he equally shares the housework with his wife, since they both are voice actors. In the end of the article, Elisabeth asks the tips for women to encourage men to do housework.

Excerpt 20

Elisabeth: It’s the first time for us to have a Dad guest, so do you have any tips to let men in the society help housework?

Iwata: Men are simple, aren’t they? We are happy when we get praised. We become cocky and do things when we are relied on and flattered.

Suzumura: I see. So it’s better for the wives not to say “Do something” but say instead

“Well done”?

Iwata: Exactly. It is the same with kids in rebellious phase, so if we are told “Do this!” then we feel “Shut up”. But if we are told “Oh it is tough” or “Could you please help me a bit?”, then we do it saying “Yeah yeah”. Then if we are told “Thank you!” then we feel like “Ah well, I would do it again if you say that much”. Men are really simple. We are so simple, so I hope women to flatter them and rely on them.

The excerpt above starts with the question that pre-assumes that women mainly handle housework and men are reluctant to help, as other articles in the data also illuminate. Iwata emphasizes the natural characteristics of men as simple and encourages women to praise men. By depicting men as simple and immature (*It is the same with kids in rebellious phase,*), he assigns the leadership to women in domestic labour. On the other hand, by asking women to praise them, men still succeed to keep their status as highest in the family.

Hence, the *Men participate in childrearing discourse* constructs hybrid masculinity. Hybrid masculinity adopts caring role to meet the social expectations but still upholds dominating power over women. Within the discourse, women depict themselves as the main decision-makers in domestic sphere, but they succeed to encourage men to participate in childcare as supplemental caregivers by lowering their own position. Men also position themselves in a higher status than women as caregivers in a household.

7.5 Equal parenthood discourse

In addition to the discourses discovered in previous research, this study identifies the *Equal parenthood discourse* which does not contribute to reproduce unbalanced power relations of gender. This discourse is deployed to explicitly reject the notion of patriarchal gender role. Within the discourse, men are treated as one of parents who are equal partners of women.

In the article titled “Beginners guide of the paternity leave for men. The 3 merits that a father who took the paternity leave for 9 months thinks (Mo.10)”, Takahashi who took 9-months-paternity leave, tells his experience and recommends to the other men to take the leave.

Excerpt 21

“Men can also acquire the skill of childrearing and sense of ownership if they handle it seriously. Especially when the first child is born, there is no gap of childrearing skill between women and men.” “Nobody cannot acquire a skill without doing it. The flip side of the idea is that anybody can acquire the skill if they do. The same in sports or work.” He gives three reasons why he recommends the paternity leave to other men: “you have time to face to own children’s growth”, “you can support the wife in postpartum”, “you can operate risk diversification between wife”.

What the third “risk diversification” means? Takahashi described.

“When the wife gets sick or needs to stay in a hospital, the skill to do One-ope is essential. Not only the emergent situation is the matter, but she also goes on a trip with her friends.”

In the excerpt, Takahashi normalizes the involvement in childcare by insisting that anyone can acquire the childrearing skill regardless of gender. Within the discourse, he positions himself as one of parents who has no difference as a caregiver compared to his wife. Caring masculinity is constructed in a way to promote egalitarianism ideology in this discourse.

The male author of the article titled “Why I get irritated when I’m called as *Ikumen* (No.23)” explicitly criticises the notion of traditional gender role. The author gives several reasons why he gets irritated by being called as *Ikumen* and why people should not use the word. One of the reasons is that the word *Ikumen* ignores the housework.

Excerpt 22

When we handle domestic labour, housework is essential and it is deeply intertwined with childcare. However, because the word “Ikumen” is so strong, it only focuses on the side of “men engaging in childrearing”.

...

there are many cases that someone is called as “Ikumen” even when he “helped his wife just after a childbirth” or “helped regularly only a part of the domestic chores”. Of course, it is better than nothing, but the threshold to use “Ikumen” is too low so that it can produce

massive numbers of fathers who think “I’m doing enough” only by changing the baby’ diapers, taking a bath together, or playing with the kids in a park.

He argues that the word *Ikumen* may position men who only partially engage in childrearing as great. The discourse is adopted to criticise and challenge the emerging hybrid masculinity that the word *Ikumen* contains. In contrast, he implicitly depicts himself as a caregiver who takes care of the regular domestic chores.

Furthermore, several news articles reject hegemonic salaryman masculinity by referring to the *Men work discourse* constructed by others such as a boss or colleagues in companies. In the article “Is doing a childcare a ‘hell’? The father’s anger was provoked from the conversation between men (No.21)” (see also Excerpt 12), a man presents the conversation with another man whom he knew through his work.

Excerpt 23

Man: “I have a habit to stay in a toilet to read a newspaper for 20 mins in the morning”

Me: “That’s nice. I don’t have really time in the morning”

Man: “Do you wake up late?”

Me: “No, the wife is already at her work, so I take care of my kids”

Man: “Really!? That sounds like a hell”

Me: “It’s tough but it’s not a hell”

...

Man: “I have two kids but I’ve never done such thing. Your wife is cruel”

Me: “Cruel? Why?”

Man: “Because you have to handle them before your work”

Me: “No, the wife also works so it’s the same. Please stop saying that she is cruel.”

Man: “I’m sorry. But if I were you, it’s a hell for me”

Me: “Then your wife is in the hell, right?”

Man: “What?”

Me: “Excuse me. But you said it’s a hell”

Man: “I don’t mean it”

Me: "But isn't it a contradiction? Your wife has been in the hell that you just said"

Man: "It's not a hell for her. Because I earn money"

Me: "I don't think that earning money and the toughness of the morning are not related"

Man: "They are related"

This was the conversation with a man whom he got to know through his job. ... He thought "It is wrong to think that working outside is tough and staying home and doing the housework are easy", and tweeted. ... In addition, the man stated that "There is no association with the toughness of the childcare and how much to earn. It is also wrong to think that the person who earns less should do childcare".

The man who upholds the *Men work discourse* clearly constructs hegemonic masculinity as a breadwinner. By positioning the wife of another man as "cruel", he positions the wife as the caregiver who should primarily take the responsibility of childcare. On the other hand, the man, who tweeted the conversation, constructs caring masculinity within the *Equal parenthood discourse*. By referring to the conversation and condemning another man, he accomplishes to deny the conventional gender role.

The article "Paternity leave, the biggest challenge is the less income? Various reasons that they cannot take it even though they want to (No.8)" presents stories that men hesitate to take paternity leave. One of the episodes presents that a husband of a wife was helpful and cooperative for childrearing, so that he applied for taking a paternity leave.

Excerpt 24

However, his boss persistently asked him "Do you really take the paternity leave? Doesn't your wife's family help her? It may affect your promotions in the future if you take the leave, but is it really fine? Why don't you take the paid day offs instead of paternity leave?", and he didn't approve the application of the paternity leave.

...

"The boss is part of the so-called baby boom generation so that I guess he's never participated in childcare. The paternity leave is not familiar to all yet, but if anyone can

take it, it will give the change to deepen the family tie and built the trust for the company which gives such an opportunity. It is a shame that it would not realize unless it's obligated in law

Another example presents the *Men work discourse* deployed by a local doctor. The article “Maternity myth that doesn’t vanish. What Ryuchell couple noticed. The change of Pekorin. We do in our own way (No.28)” discusses how Ryuchell, who was nominated as “*Ikumen* of the year” in 2018, shares the domestic chores with his wife with other participants. One of the male participants reports his experience.

Excerpt 25

When I went to the check up for the one-year-old child with my wife, a doctor didn’t see me at all but explained everything to my wife. Without asking anything from us, he told me “you as a father should sometimes help childrearing”. I felt an atmosphere that the main person to do childcare is a woman and felt a bit annoyed.

In excerpt 24 and 25, men in a company or local community adopt the *Men work discourse*, positioning other men as breadwinners who should not be deeply involved in childcare at home. However, the speakers who refer to the episodes in excerpts succeed to construct caring masculinity within the *Equal parenthood discourse*, by rejecting the traditional patriarchal system and position himself or her husband as equal partners of women within the household.

Therefore, the *Equal parenthood discourse* constructs caring masculinity that does not contribute to the reproduction of patriarchal power relations. The discourse is adopted to reject hegemonic and hybrid masculinity. The speakers position men as equal caregivers with women without giving an extra status to men as “fathers”.

8 DISCUSSION

This research provides insights into the various discourses of masculinities of fatherhood and the subject positions offered for men in Japanese news media. In contemporary Japan, the shift of social expectation to fathers from salaryman breadwinning role to caring role is highly evident. However, the traditional gender roles that assigns men as breadwinners and women as primal caregivers persist. Hybrid masculinity that adopts caring role but upholds the dominating power over women has been also observed. Since diverse masculinities has emerged in Japan today, this study attempts to illustrate the discourses surrounding fathers and the relationality between discourses, as well as subject positions available for Japanese fathers. This study approaches masculinity in Japanese news media with Foucauldian discourse analysis, which is grounded in social constructionist framework.

8.1 Findings of this study

In this study, five discourses and subject positions are identified in the Japanese news articles. In the *Men work discourse*, the traditional salaryman masculinity that illustrates the masculine figure of financial providers is constructed, as the previous studies also reveal (e.g., Funabashi, 2004; Taga, 2005; Tatsumi, 2013, 2015, 2017; Vassallo, 2017). This discourse is drawn upon by speakers to naturalize the immobilized division of labour between men and women. The discourse is constructed by men themselves to legitimate their absence from family, as well as by women to make sense of their single operations of family responsibility. Thus, within the *Men work discourse*, in addition to men positioning themselves as breadwinners, women position themselves as primary caregivers and in contrast depict men as primary earners for family.

In the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse*, men are depicted as inferior compared to women in domestic sphere (Tatsumi, 2013). The discourse sometimes takes the essentialist stance, justifying that men are incapable of childcare because they are “men” (Tatsumi, 2013). Those who draw upon the discourse are mainly women, and the discourse accomplishes to

naturalize that women takes the initiative in domestic sphere. Within the discourse, women take up the position as the primary caregivers who take care of domestic chores and offer men the subject position as secondary helpers of women. Though men have less power in this discourse, the discourse justifies preserving the traditional gender role in a household.

The *time with family is precious discourse* highlights closeness to the family. In this discourse, the most important aspect of a good father is to have a close contact with his children (c.f., Brandth & Kvande, 1998; Hanlon, 2012). The discourse constructs caring masculinity that emphasizes the affective, emotional, and relational caring by men (Elliott, 2016). However, this discourse does not necessarily challenge the gendered ideologies of family. The discourse is drawn upon by men in order to emphasize either the willingness to actively devote to the tough and mundane childcare or the willingness to enjoy the time with the children in their limited leisure time outside of work. Therefore, on the one hand, this discourse deeply associates with the *Equal parenthood discourse* in a way that the precious time with children motivates parents to engage in childcare regardless of their gender. On the other hand, the *Men work discourse* is often combined with the *Time with family is precious discourse* to stress the preciousness of the limited time to spend with family outside of work. These two discourses justify men's irregular and special involvements to childcare with the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*. Thus, although the *Time with family is precious discourse* clearly constructs caring masculinity which contains the emotional and inclusive figures of fatherhood, it still may link with the reproduction of gender inequality.

In the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*, men present their willingness to be involved in childcare. However, the gender of the parents as "men" is emphasized and distinguished from women, which allows men to position themselves different caregivers from women. The *Men participate in childrearing discourse* is often combined with the *Man work discourse* to make their participation only in the "fun" aspects of childcare understandable, while women take the responsibility for the rest (Johansson & Klinth, 2008; Edley, 2017). Furthermore, involved men with domestic labour are positioned in a higher status than women within the discourse by both women and men (c.f., Brandth and Kvande, 1998). Thus,

this discourse constructs hybrid masculinity by strategically borrowing the feminine feature (i.e. nurturing) (Bridges and Pascoe 2014). This hybrid masculinity allows men to enjoy the prestige of being the social expected figure of ideal fatherhood and at the same time conceal inequality between men and women (Bridges and Pascoe 2014). Within this discourse, men's active involvement in family is considered to be "picking out the good bits" rather than a transformation of masculinity towards gender equality (Johansson & Klinth, 2008).

Lastly, the *Equal parenthood discourse* is identified. This discourse is distinctive from the previous studies which identify only the discourses that contribute to the reproduction of the patriarchal system in the context of fathering (e.g., Eisen & Yamashita, 2019; Tatsumi, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017). In the *Equal parenthood discourse*, women and men are depicted as equal partners and they share the domestic labour regardless of their gender. The salaryman masculinity and hybrid masculinity are condemned by both men and women within this discourse. By challenging masculinities that reproduce inequality, the speakers succeed to position themselves as gender equal-friendly. Within this discourse, men achieve to construct caring masculinity that desists from reproducing gender hierarchy.

As Parker (1990) states, the discourses refer to other discourses. This study also identifies the interrelation between the discourses of masculinities. The major finding is that the *Men work discourse* is often adopted to make sense of the other discourses. The *Men work discourse* legitimates the division of the labour between men and women, while it is also combined with the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse* to justify the limited commitment of men to childcare. Furthermore, the *Men work discourse* also makes the men's passion for the limited time with children in the *Time with family is precious discourse* understandable and thus works hand in hand with the *Men participate in childrearing discourse* and the positions linked to it. The *Men work discourse* does not contradict the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*, but rather work together to uphold hybrid masculinity that enjoys a good bit of both caring and hegemonic masculinity.

On the other hand, since the *Men work discourse* and the *Equal parenthood discourse* conflict each other, they offer the oppositional subject positions for men. The *Equal parenthood*

discourse explicitly rejects the *Men work discourse* and proposes the emancipation from the traditional gender role. The *Equal parenthood discourse* does not accept the *Men participate in childrearing discourse* either, since the subject position as equal partners is only accomplished by depreciating the gender of the caregivers. The *Equal parenthood discourse* sometimes involves the *Time with family is precious discourse* to offer men the subject position of willingly involved parents.

8.2 Indication of the findings

The Foucauldian discourse analysis framework with six analytical stages proposed by Willig (2008) allows us to discuss the practices and psychological experiences of men as well. As practices, men and women may actively play the traditional gender roles as complementary partners in the household in the *Men work discourse* and the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse*. As breadwinners, men may be willing to and are demanded to prioritise their work rather than housework. Even if they engage in domestic chores, the domestic labour would not be their primal family responsibility (Tatsumi, 2015). The *Time with family is precious discourse* and the *Men participate in childrearing discourse* encourage men to be involved in childrearing as much as possible. The *Men participate in childrearing discourse* may allow men to choose the irregular and “fun” aspect of childcare, such as playing in a park with the children (Edley, 2017; Johansson & Klinth, 2008). This indicates that even if the government encourage or obligate men to participate in childcare including taking paternity leaves, if men construct hybrid masculinity within the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*, the legislation does not substantially solve the gender inequality (Tatsumi, 2015). Moreover, even though the *Ikumen* project launched by the government has been successful to promote caring ideology, the concept that stresses on “men”¹⁰ should be reconsidered, since it may endorse the gendered practices in households.

The *Equal parenthood discourse*, on the other hand, may encourage men to handle domestic labour equally and taking the same childcare responsibility with women. The practices of

¹⁰ Such as the slogan of the project “A Man who raises, changes the family. Changes the society.”

men may include to make sure that women in families have the same opportunity of economic participation as men, such as taking a long-term paternity leave or being capable of handling mundane domestic chores in case their wives are absent. The current schemes by the government tend to focus on the either of women or men, such as the *Ikumen* project (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2010), or “Department to create the society where all the women shine” (Prime Minister’s Office Japan, 2020) which was established to legislate comprehensive policies to promote the economic participation of women. This study proposes to the Japanese government that they ought to focus on the parent units rather either of parents on the legislation. Furthermore, the government and public institutions should be critical of the use of the gendered term “mother” and “father” in the public services, such as the name of the services like “mother’s classes (母親学級)¹¹”. Media should play an important role to infiltrate the equal parenthood ideology in society by adopting the discourse which naturalizes the equal partnership of women and men in family.

Since there is not necessarily direct relationship between the language and the actual mental status, subjectivity of men only can be assumed (Willig, 2008). Within the *Men work discourse*, men may feel that they are fulfilling their responsibility by earning money for the family regardless of their lack of commitment of domestic labour. The *Men are not good at childrearing discourse* and the subject position by women as secondary caregivers may induce the inferiority of men, which may distance men from childrearing. For instance, a man in a news article No.30 reports his reluctant attitude towards childcare commitment, since his child refuses his care, and he hardly has a confidence to take care of the child. When these two discourses are widely supported by people around, men would “feel home (居場所感)” when they are less actively involved in childcare in public sphere, such as in companies and local communities (Tatsumi, 2014).

Within the *Time with family is precious discourse*, childcare is positively welcomed by men. As Mizukoshi et al. (2016) identify, family commitment is depicted by men as what they

¹¹ guidance for childcare before the childbirth, offered by maternity hospitals or municipalities

enjoy rather than a burden. On the other hand, in the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*, being positioned in a higher status than women may provide men a psychological satisfaction regardless of their actual commitments for the domestic labour. In contrast of the *Men work discourse*, in the *Equal parenthood discourse* men may feel satisfied and responsible to engage in childcare, while they may experience to be torn with the contradicted subject positions that the *Men work discourse* and the *Equal parenthood discourse* offer. Men suffering between the normative expectations as financial providers and caregivers are empirically investigated (cf., Hunter et al., 2017; Tatsumi, 2015). The data in this study also suggests the experience of a man which may be translated as an inner conflict between two oppositional subject positions, as described that the man's family commitment was "forgiven" when he saw other involved fathers in a park (Article No.11).

8.3 Link to Hegemonic masculinity

This study investigates the constructed discourses with the help of the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987). The concept of hegemonic masculinity allows this study to explore gender relations, such as power of men over women, the plurality of the masculinities and the changing dynamics (c.f., Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This study identifies that hegemonic salaryman masculinity partly maintains its domination over women in a way that men uphold breadwinning ideology is identified in majority of the articles within the data. Hegemonic salaryman masculinity within the *Men work discourse* endorses the patriarchal relations between women and men in households, and other discourses contain the relationality along with/against hegemonic masculinity.

On the other hand, caring masculinity may be considered as "dominant masculinity" termed by Messerschmidt (2012, 2019), since most of the discursive objects contained the involved fatherhood, even in the *Men work discourse*. Messerschmidt (2012) defines that dominant masculinity is the most common, powerful, and most widespread masculinity. It should be differentiated from hegemonic masculinity since dominant masculinity may do little to legitimate men's power over women. However, attention has to be paid as this study

identifies both of caring masculinities which embrace patriarchal privilege, and which do not. Thus, this study illustrates that caring masculinity can involve a new system of power and inequality as hybrid masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014), while caring masculinity has the potential to be non-hegemonic “equality masculinity” (Messerschmidt, 2012). Therefore, the distinction within caring masculinity whether it endorses the recreation of gender hierarchy or promotes the egalitarian ideology is critical. Further study on the domination of caring masculinity in society and the relationality between hybrid masculinity should be conducted.

Furthermore, emphasized femininity bundled with hegemonic masculinity allows us to observe gendered ideology that accommodates the interests of men (Connell, 1987, p.183). Emphasized femininity construction is identified as adaptations to men’s power in this study, such as positioning themselves as primary caregivers in family. Emphasized femininity is positively adopted by the women especially when they highlight their superior ability of nurturance. Although emphasized femininity is most discernible in the *Men work discourse* and the *Men are not good at childrearing discourse*, also it is constructed within the *Men participate in childrearing discourse*, as women position themselves as competent compared to men in domestic sphere by strategically praising men and guiding men to help with domestic labour.

Connell defines the forms of femininity as: “compliance of with this subordination” which is emphasized femininity, “strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance”, or “complex strategic combinations of compliances, resistance, and co-operation” (Connell, 1987, p.183-184). The interplay among these femininities influences the dynamics of change in the gender order (Connell, 1987, p.184). Although this study has not fully concentrated upon the formation of femininity, the femininity which prioritizes work or leaves the responsibility of childcare to men are identified. This femininity explicitly declares the non-compliance to the subordination to men, so that it is heavily criticized by men who upholds the hegemonic masculinity. For instance, a man in Excerpt 23 in the analysis section criticises another man’s wife who leaves childcare to a man due to her work as “*cruel*”. Moreover, in the article No.28, Fujimono shares her experience as:

Fujimoto: In my case, when I returned to the work from the maternity leave and did the overtime work, my colleague asked me “what about your kids?”. When I answered as “My husband is picking them up”, then he told me “What? Your husband is being nice to you. Get hold of yourself. Poor kids.” Even though the man also has a child.

The excerpts demonstrate that the femininity which resists against hegemonic masculinity is considered as a threat for men. The resisting femininity seen above can be considered as the key to challenge the traditional gender power relations, working with caring masculinity within *Equal parenthood discourse*.

Moreover, the concept of geography of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) helps this study to illustrate the regional level (i.e., nation level) of masculinities and their potential influences in the local level of daily practices. This study suggests how the discourses may provide individuals with the models of masculinity to individuals and psychological experiences. Moreover, the dynamics of Japanese national level of masculinity deemed to follow the same trend with the global level of the decline in patriarchy. Therefore, it suggests that the study on the transnational gender shifts may give us a deeper understanding of gender dynamics of Japanese gender relation too (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). On the other hand, Rush (2005) insists that East-Asian patriarchy should be differentiated from the Western version, since Confusion patriarchy is more enduring as a power of control by male in household based on filial piety. Since the data of this study also contains several discourses adopting *ie* concept where the virtue of filial piety is embedded (c.f., Excerpt 5), it highlights the necessity of the masculinity studies specified in the regional levels.

8.4 Contribution of this study

This study contributes to critical social psychology by adding to the growing literature on meanings attached to fatherhood in contemporary societies (c.f., Riley & Evans, 2017). This study adds to the articulated knowledge to make sense of especially changing masculinity in domestic sphere (Gogh, 2018). Furthermore, this study is relevant since it offers Japanese social psychology realm the critical perspective to approach masculinity, since Japanese

psychology has mainly adopted the mainstream psychology grounded in positivism (Aono et al., 2013). Tatsumi (2013) approaches the discursive objects of masculinity of fatherhood, the subject positions for fathers has not yet been investigated in Japan to the best of my knowledge. This study succeeds to identify dynamics of masculinities in contemporary Japan where traditional hegemonic masculinity, hybrid masculinity, and gender equality friendly caring masculinity coexist and interrelate each other. Therefore, this study adds the understanding of the complexity of masculinities of fatherhood and the subject position in Japanese social psychology realm.

Furthermore, as a contribution to masculinity studies, this study accomplishes to suggest the possibility of a gradual shift of Japanese fatherhood towards gender equal version. Previous studies also have reported gender equal masculinity such as in Scandinavian countries (e.g., Christensen & Jensen, 2014), and positive attitude towards caring has been reported already in Japan too (e.g., Mizukoshi et al., 2016). However, Japanese gender equal masculinity which explicitly rejects hegemonic and hybrid masculinity is newly discovered in this study. Certain number of the news articles have adopted the *Equal parenthood discourse* within the data. That indicates that the gender relations in contemporary Japan may be shifting towards gender equality, though the shift is slow.

8.5 Limitation

This study involves several limitations. First, the suppliers of the news articles sometimes have biased stance towards domestic chores. Within the 31 news articles, 7 articles are published from the source named LIMO¹². 5 out of 7 news articles by LIMO target the housewives who have uncooperative husbands. Hence, LIMO may take the relatively clear stance of supporting the traditional gender roles than other news suppliers. On the other hand, other suppliers which have multiple news articles within the data¹³, such as BuzzFeed Japan, Business Insider Japan, withnews, and Huffpost Japan are likely to have a neutral or liberal

¹² The web media which specializes in the topic about “Life and Money”

¹³ The numbers of the article within the data: BuzzFeed Japan (4articles), Business Insider Japan (4articles), withnews (3articles), and Huffpost Japan (3articles), TOKYO FM+ (2articles)

stance towards the family responsibility, while TOKYO FM+ tend to publish the articles which construct hybrid masculinity. Thus, even though the stance of the original media towards gender roles tends to be linked to the discourse constructions in the articles, the varieties of the sources are deemed to be valid.

Second, this study analyses the discourses adopted only in the limited contexts. The analysis target is limited to the heterosexual married couples who have healthy small children who are up to about 6 years old. The articles that are not aligned with the targets are eliminated from the data, such as single parents, same sex couples, children who have disabilities, and couples of foreign nationalities living in Japan. Furthermore, financial conditions that may influence the forms of masculinities, such as employment status, occupation, and the social class of the family, are not considered in this study. Christensen and Jensen (2014) suggest that intersectional approach can be combined with masculinity studies to understand the hierarchic power relations between men. Since different social categories mutually constitute each other as overall forms of social differentiation or systems of oppression (Christensen and Jensen, 2014), it is important to focus on the complexity rather than simple dichotomous. This study focuses on the major social category in the childcare context due to the limited resources and the schedule, the complexity of the oppression forms between men should be analysed in further research.

Moreover, the limitation and ethical issues in the respect of the term “father” should be noted. In order to examine the discourses surrounding the domestic involvement of men, the searching words of the data are listed as “father”, “men”, “*ikumen*”, and “dad”. Thus, this study inevitably collects the news articles which give a meaning to a male parent to be a man. News articles that generally discuss on childcare and housework might construct different discourses on men, though this study did not concern it due to the limited resources and time. Furthermore, since the word “father” already is gendered term (Tatsumi, 2015), this study may contribute the reproduction of gendered roles of family responsibility by focusing on childcare by men. As the findings of this study illustrates, the emphasis on “man” in childcare may alienate equal parenthood but instead may reproduce the notions which endorses the

construction of harmful masculinity for gender equality. As an author, I have attempted to attend to the study with reflectivity. I have presented thoroughly the processes of the study, such as the angle of the study, choice of the research focus, data selection, and analysis process. Furthermore, in the analysis section, I have attempted the respectful presentations of the speakers whose voices are presented in data which enables me and readers to analyse the data with accurate presentation of discursive constructions.

Lastly, as the nature of the discursive studies, the generalization of the study is not applicable as same ways as other studies often expect. Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) argue that the quality criteria such as objectivity and reliability are appropriate for the evaluation of qualitative analysis only when the analysis is grounded in realist epistemological framework. Since discursive studies are sceptical of all foundationalist knowledge claims including the concept of objectivity and reliability, the discussion of generalization of the independent study is redundant. However, Madill et al. (2000) claimed that the analysis is still assessible on the internal coherence, ability to explain deviant cases, and enabling understanding. This study has explored the different discursive constructions including contradicting perspectives, and the author attempted to explain the relationality between the discursive constructions and locate them within the discussion as whole. The contributions for individual readers are varied, though the relevance of this study should be noted considering that it illuminates the diversity and the interrelationship between discourses in Japanese news media.

8.6 Further study

This study suggests further possibilities of the research on masculinity of fatherhood in Japan. Since the national level of discourses and subject positions in the news articles are revealed, the local level of psychological experience of men should be investigated deeply. In this study, the voices of men are not vividly displayed, since many of the writers of the news articles are women. Further interviews for young fathers can be conducted to investigate their experiences along with the dynamics of masculinity forms in the Japanese society.

Moreover, the relationality of emphasized femininity and other femininities, along with the identified masculinities should be investigated. Since femininities and masculinities are paired to construct the dynamics of gender order, investigations on the emerging femininities challenging the emphasized femininity would deepen the understanding of the gender relations as whole.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 Selected news articles as data for this study

No.	News Article's Title	Original Media	Published Date
1	I will lose my own time... the prescription for the fathering beginners	Huffpost Japan	20/09/2019
2	We asked 'Daddy with the kids' in the weekdays! Please tell how to spend time with the children	TOKYO FM+	16/09/2019
3	There is no perfect childcare.. "Theory of Man's childcare" Discussion with Tetsuya Ando from Fathering Japan	Huffpost Japan	11/09/2019
4	Popular voice actors Mitsuo Iwata * Kenichi Suzumura. The instruction manual of dads for moms	TOKYO FM+	02/09/2019
5	What to do to let your husband be 'God husband' who can handle childcare and housework? The actual experiences by wives	LIMO	29/08/2019
6	How men should think about "Paternity leave"	BuzzFeed Japan	20/08/2019
7	The strong tendency of women as "Men work, women home" outside of Kanto region. 70% has experienced "Because men/women"	Business Insider Japan	15/08/2019
8	Paternity leave, the biggest challenge is the less income? Various reasons that they cannot take even though they want	Bengo4.com	21/07/2019
9	Though I took the initiative in childrearing and housework, intended to support the wife's career...The husband speaks his gloomy mind by being asked to be <i>Daikokubashira</i>	Withnews	07/07/2019
10	Beginners guide of the paternity leave for men. The 3 merits that a father who took the paternity leave for 9 months thinks	BuzzFeed Japan	27/06/2019
11	Father who carries the 'sin' in his back wished to have daddy-friends and spread the novel excursion all over Japan	BuzzFeed Japan	14/06/2019
12	Is the transfer after taking a paternity leave "bullying". "Accusation on twitter" Is the transfer which ignores family acceptable	Business Insider Japan	04/06/2019
13	Youth going home saying "I need to bath with the child" and middle age workers "work till 10pm"... how do we solve the unsatisfaction evolves in the office	YomiDr.	27/09/2019
14	The result of purposefully approaching my husband modestly to divide the childcare and housework.. was it too late to notice!?	LIMO	26/09/2019

15	“I didn’t know anything about women before and after the childbirth” The reality of the report by a subculture man who became a father	Huffpost Japan	25/09/2019
16	“#Father’s leisurely excursion” where “fathers” can meet apart from work. I, who value family time, am “forgiven”	Withnews	22/09/2019
17	The trend wave of obligating the paternity leaves! But is it really necessary? Wives speak their true mind	LIMO	19/09/2019
18	Why overslept? Why drunk too much? Common episodes of dad and kids at home that mom got surprised	Kufura	08/09/2019
19	A husband who doesn’t cooperate no matter what you do... 3 tips to let your husband to participate in childcare and housework	LIMO	02/07/2019
20	<i>Ikumen</i> will be obsolete? 7 changes happened to men who experienced to manage the One-Ope	Business Insider Japan	14/06/2019
21	“Is doing a childcare a ‘hell’? The father’s anger was provoked from the conversation between men	BuzzFeed Japan	13/05/2019
22	Paternity leave was not ‘holiday’ at all. ‘Man and work and family’ that Tsuruno want to tell to R25 generations	New R25	09/05/2019
23	Why I get irritated when I’m called as <i>Ikumen</i>	ITmedia Business Online	10/05/2019
24	“Why he is in a park in the noon of weekdays.” He couldn’t join the circle of moms.. the worries of men who takes the paternity leaves	AbemaTIMES	21/06/2019
25	Argument on the rule of childcare with the husband who is “ <i>Ikumen</i> who helps only in weekend”! The result of the married couple’s meeting is..!?	FanFunFukuoka	09/09/2019
26	Childcare is tough even with Two-Ope!? Two keys to overcome the tough time	LIMO	09/09/2019
27	Weekend with a husband is “physically” easier? The share of housework that does not create a stress for wife	LIMO	03/09/2019
28	Maternity myth that doesn’t vanish. What Ryuchell couple noticed. The change of Pekorin. We do in our own way	Withnews	01/09/2019
29	For dads who feels to handle both work and childcare	Mynavi news	15/08/2019
30	The anxiety of women, the excuse of men, there is no justice between wife and husband?	LIMO	16/06/2019
31	Does the paternity leave make family happy? What happened in family which took a paternity leave and the wish of wives	Business Insider Japan	28/05/2019
